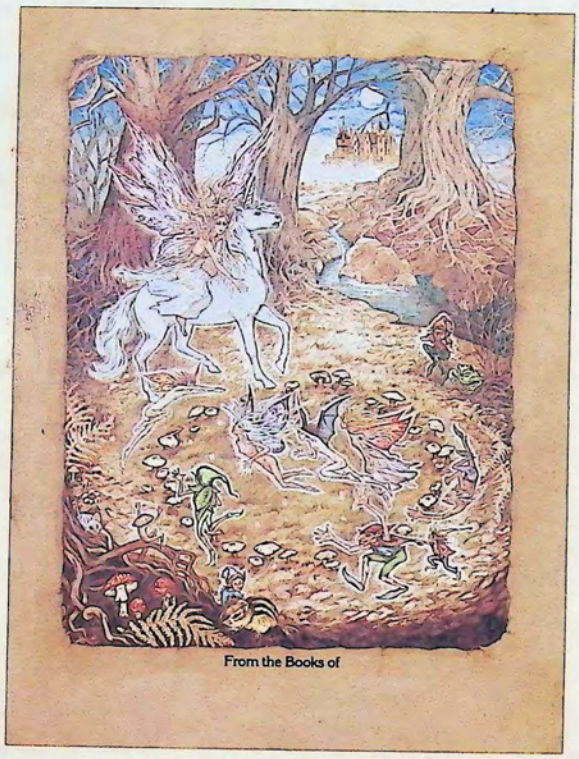
D. H. MOORE

The Early Literary Essays

(1940 - 1965)

Volume 1



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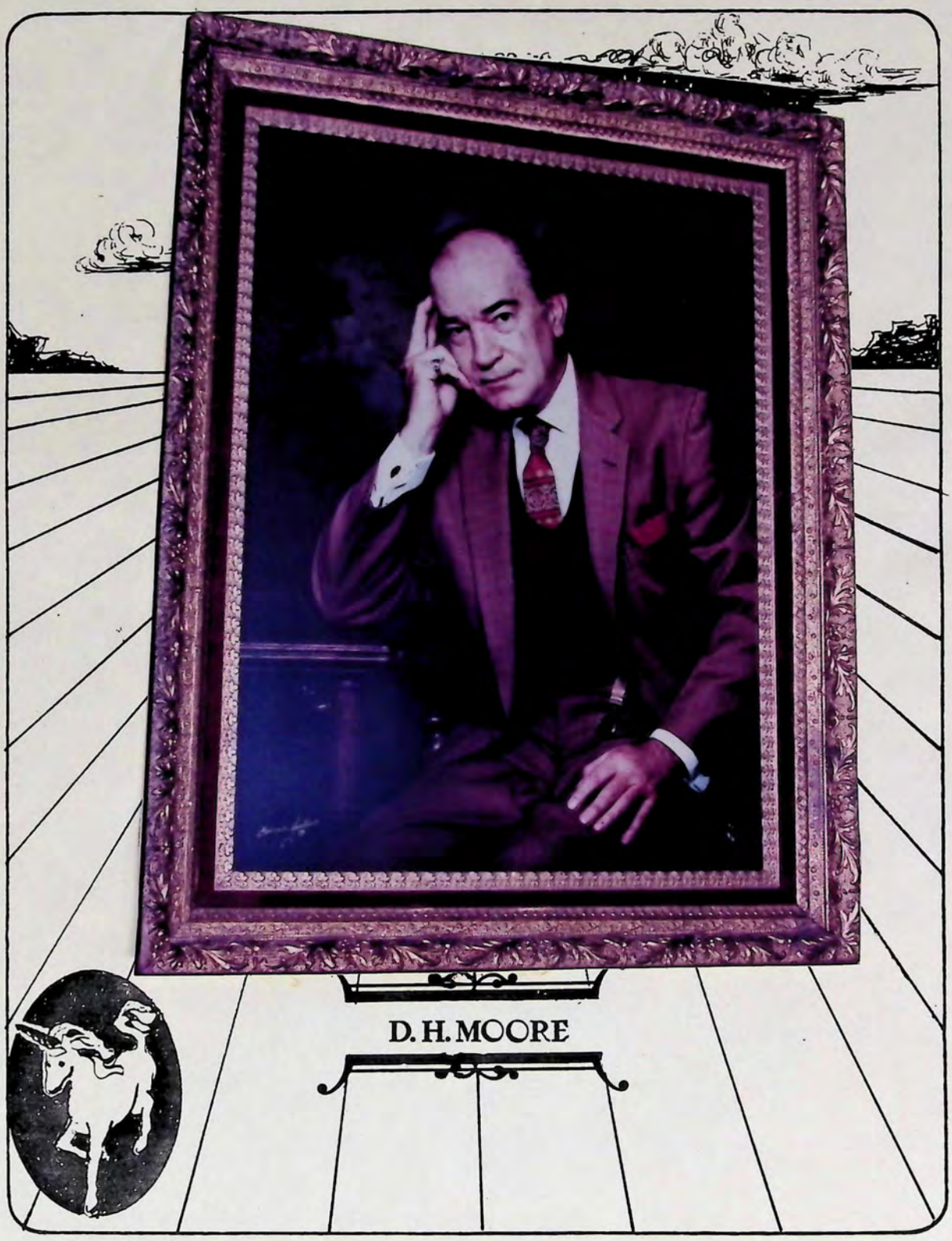

D. H. MOORE

This unfinished life-size portrait of Lilitchka marks the point at which I ceased painting. Without her, the painting, the musical compositions, the versification, the novel-writing became rather meaningless.Because of her I was - because of me she existed. And, being a caulic Kelt, the notion has grown that were the painting to be finished, I, too, would be finsihed. In consequence, the painting will never be finished this side of the Bourne.

Lilitchka

The Unicorns of Springtime

Fleeing down September

Fox-fires that burned

And gave a Summer datum;

The heat of a heart

That no longer remembers,

And all my unlived days

Now forever Autumn.

THE EARLY LITERARY ESSAYS of D. H. MOORE 1940 - 1965

D. H. Moore II

The Editorial Group, Ltd...

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Please Note: The life-size portrait, taken when I was 62, serving as frontispiece, was taken by Emma Hooker of Los Altos.

Dedicated to the Memory of

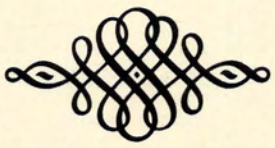
Lilitchka

"What is it that happened?

Now that you are gone,

And why,

I feel I hardly knew you!"



"The originality I mean...is originality of treatment, not of subject. It is only unimaginative writers who ever invent. The true writer is known by the use he makes of what he annexes, and he annexes everything."

- OSCAR WILDE

"Who so writes the social history of his own time must expect to be attacked for everything he said, and for everything he has not said; but those little drawbacks will not discourage a man who loves truth and liberty, expects nothing, fears nothing, asks nothing; and limits his ambition to the cultivation of Letters."

VOLTAIRE- April, 1732

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Prelibation

Traditionally, the autobiography of the authentic writer is a thoughtful assemblage of half-remembered truths, inconclusive encounters, and liberally sprinkled with familiar points of literary references. You learn something of his forebears, his education, influences, how he coped with what Edmund Wilson called the shock of recognition, and, perhaps, the evolution of a personal literary philosophy, but that is rarely noticed nowadays.

But seldom does the writer emerge as a three-dimensional human being, nor, I feel, is this really required, if the writer is truly an authentic writer. One reads autobiography because of one's attraction to or interest in the writer's *works*, and picking up an autobiography of the writer is a natural extention of that interest.

Modern biography, on the other hand, has tended to become a collexion of popular abstractions, laboured attempts to be "cute" with a language never mastered, and journalistic, sly gossip. So-called movie-stars, TV characters posing as actors and actresses, politicians, sports figures, jazz musicians, and even street-walkers have their alleged autobiographies ghost-written by second-rate writers. Such peurile, ego-centric posturing is naturally shallow, vain, and proves that vanity, not sex - as Freud insisted, is man's strongest drive.

Regardless of form, subject, or style, the collective works of the authentic writer are *always* autobiography. Some writers easily admit this, such as Mary McCarthy; others violently deny it, such as Norman Mailer. It is also true that when an authentic writer sets out to write an autobiography, for whatever reason or from whatever motivation, the result will always be inconclusive, fragmented, no matter how interesting or entertaining the work might be. In the main, most present chaste or ornate windows, partially obscured by facts left out or forgotten, through which the perceptive reader may discern the writer's wake for lost illusions and corrupted ideals. Some, of course, are simply *apologia*, as is the fashion among the limp-wristed breed.

Authentic writing, irrespective of its form - novel, poem, play, essay - is always autobiography. It may disguise itself within the adopted form, or hide behind privately conjured symbolism. Or, like modern American journalists and so-called investigative reporters, the writer will use self-made, pre-determined definitions and then bend the facts, the truth, to suit his definitions. There is also the *Mea Culpa* school of literary autobiography, which produce the most useless and uninteresting work, in terms of offering the reader significant socio-literary, socio-historical, socio-political insights into the

writer's time and place.

In casting about for a properly *dégagé* form myself, I found that neither the traditional nor the contemporary form was suitable for what I wanted to do. Not being a famous writer, a public figure, celebrity, or concerned with seducing the bitch-goddess Success, I simply felt that the forms available did not lend themselves as appropriate vehicles to carry the writings I wished to present.

It occurred to me then that in as much as all authentic writing *is* autobiography, it would follow that a writer's output would, in its *collective* assessment, completely define for the perceptive, the writer, himself - his values, standards, biases, compulsions, morals and talents. The result of my thinking has been this uniform five volume series of writings on a variety of subjects and themes which have moved in and out of my peregrinating life. *In toto*, I feel, they should project a more honest image than any thick volume crammed with first person singular, perpendicular exposition.

While I have written in most literary forms, the essay, in the Victorian literary sense, has always been a favourite form. The essay, like the sonnet, is probably the most disciplined form of literary writing. Its construction must be balanced and precise. It tends towards the epigrammatic, which will always delight a Keltic soul; and it should culminate in the periodic paragraph. The ideas presented must be held together by antithesis, balance, a careful structural sense.

More: the prose must be coherent, consciously structured to enforce the ideas for the unknown reader. The internal rhythm of the language should carry the reader from periodic paragraph to periodic paragraph - leading to a climax in the last periodic paragraph, or even in the very last sentence.

Too many second-rate books have been written about the writer as a young man, dedicated and starving and eventually being noticed, to where the scenerio has become a *cliché*, which the authentic writer will avoid like a communicable social disease. Myself, I became a writer in patience and in rage. Having been born with a Keltic caul, my faith has been grand and a sense of my own becoming has been indestructable. Having a too perceptive insight into the tragic sense of life, I have sought to express, to make finite and communicable a sense of *nonce*, depths and heights, through unremitting practice to learn the secret alchemy of the Verb. I have sought to create imagery in prose that flows and stirs the senses while illuminating the mind.

I have sought to remove a certain epicene softness and an obvious literary vulgarity from contemporary literature; to depreciate the modern tendency to adolescent histrionics, monstrous self-pity,

base emotional over-indulgence and gross self-centeredness. I have sought to shame the emptiness of sophomoric rhetoric currently being touted as emotional truth, in the name of a "new" realism - that usually has nothing more to its claims than a giggling and clinically blurred sexual connotation.

In short, I stand against the strident enemies of all our traditional literary values, and offer a new literary concept in the form of an epigrammatic autobiography - perhaps for the edification and the solace of a generation of American writers as yet unborn.

* * *

Modern autobiography can hardly be distinguished from what passes today as fiction. The undisciplined modern mind, pretending to pursue a privately defined "reality", all too often is merely following a corpse-candle into well-deserved oblivion. The riddle of the mirror is beyond them.

The modern American writer is more nihilistic than ever were the peasantry of Russia when they over-threw the Czar. They have built a literature of *merde*. They are neither defenders nor expositors of literary standards and literary values. And their labours reflect little more than the vagaries of a vagrant ego.

While literature can make for a mind of intellectual corruption, it is equally obvious that by an harrowing ignorance of humane Letters, a writer is corrupt before he even begins to write. As has been said: deny the fact and the fact will become your master. Ignorance of and antipathy to a national normative consciousness over the last two decades has resulted in the current bankruptcy of American Letters.

Modern American education, in the name of "progressive education", has adulterated and degraded our *kultur u. Zeitgeist*, to a point where the authentic writer, forced out of his traditional role of mirror-maker for society, is faced with horrendous choices - join the half-schooled coffee-house "writers"; or stand fast, and alone, as the legitimate heir of civilised order.

Modern American education, and California offers a good case in point, has become a social technique pre-occupied with forcing *group* behaviour. (The authentic writer has always been an individual, an out-rider.) It no longer stresses traditional human values but political, economic, institutional ones; based on the sentimental idea that the individual must neglect his own character in order to conform to the least common denominator of those about him. By contrast, the

authentic writer is the very antithesis of the mob-mentality - he is the mirror, not a mirror-image, for he knows that mirrors have no image of their own. Man has never been satisfied by worship of himself in the mass.

But we were talking about writers' autobiography, and the above is pertinent, I feel, if only because autobiography has always been a legitimate part of Humane Letters, by whatever name. I hold that too much of modern writing is rootless, without any social guides save the fads and foibles of the commercial moment; a pretense to individualism in the guise of some specious and spurious "self-expression" as a "right"! - of all things. Modern writing reflects an undiscriminating defiance of literary discipline, conventions, values.

Future literary historians will, in seeking clues and keys to the culture and intellectual spirit of our time, and which traditionally were always available most accurately in the autobiography of the authentic writers of a given period, will encounter an unbelievable wasteland of blasted stumps of self-proclaimed "originality", which, on analysis, are simply reflexions only of an offensive ego.

The authentic writer has always been the servant of enduring standards of private conduct, and refracted through the uniquness of his oblique vision, revealed the order underlying the seeming disorder of his time and place. The tyranny of standardisation without standards, wherein the human experience is reduced to the lowest level of the mob, the many, can be given the lie by an authentic writer's autobiography.

Humane Letters, passed from one generation to the next, is a legacy of belief, of re-affirmation of the true, the good, the beautiful - response to which is indigenous in everyman. The complex of social, moral, religious convixions which demarc a given *kultur und Zeitgeist* have always been given expression in the literature created by the authentic writers within that given society.

It should always be kept in mind that the ethical cast of enduring Humane Letters is normative to man.

* * *
* *
*

Palo Alto,
California
1986

Preface

"This book, essentially useless and absolutely innocent, was written for no other purpose but to amuse myself; those who know need not be told; those who do not know can never be told!"

- Charles Baudelaire, 1841

Here is a book that drew no nourishment from Hell, and was not inspired by Heaven. Its purpose is not one of consolation, construction, or prophecy.

In this our time, when we make myths of our own madness and our cultural bowels are in desperate need of an authentic aesthetic catharic, it is bitterly sad to note that the American aesthetic or more specifically, American Letters, has been taken over by managed mediocrity of the great unwashed, and strained through the epicene wit of a defunct intelligensia.

Here, then, is a book born of a primitive hunger, a seeking after, albeit highly personal, an attempt to rechart for the knowing few a way back to the true, the good, the beautiful; and hopefully to posit the creative force of living reality which has been so cynically obscured by present-day aethetic degeneracy.

Like a sailor on horseback, what follows are meandering reflexions in the murky mirror of my early aesthtic life, and some of the people who enriched it along the way. A measure, too, perhaps, of my exilian maturation as poet, painter, composer, scholar, gypsy and photographer, critic, writer, and perennial spectator without a desire to participate, of the contemporary socio-aesthetic scene. I should also add, I suppose, that I am also a graduate aeronautical engineer, just to confound the issue.

In summary, however, this esoteric volume, and the four to follow, may simply be further testament to the stunning fact that a life-time is too short for a man to satisfy all the wonder haunting a caulic Keltic soul.....

LILICHKA

(IN MEMORIUM)

When the final darkness descends
And the last black night crashes into my brain,
Obliterating forever all feeling, thought and dream,
Then will I be able to forget you.

When nerves no longer nakedly ache
With individual remembrance of you,
And finally splinter in the golden bowl,
Then will I be able to forget you.

When night and darkness without pause
Grant silent asylum from memory of you,
And death triumphantly takes the dream -
The dream our love denied it,
Then will I be able to forget you.

(Written after the death of my wife.)

MALIBU '54

For Peasants With Money

Malibu.....a form without spirit, an Italian music-box without a tune: stranger alike to sorrow or beauty, having no place in today or tomorrow: and lacking even the illusion of permanent estate.

Malibu.....standing back from the howling metropolis and adjacent beach-towns like a pensioned relation, at ease neither in the drawing-room nor the skullery. The people met there were neither gaunche nor epicene, sincere nor maudlin, affluent nor significant, yet they did not refuse outright association with such verities; and their elegaic complexions admitted to the inevitable result of such an endeavour. The *morès* of all those met at Malibu tended to suggest a mind that was not in harmony with itself.

Malibu.....lacking an inherent dignity, it had manufactured its own private ego in an attempt to express its pathetic realisation of the moment - yet even in this it had failed; and the failure of a state-of-mind like Malibu to maintain its grand illusion was more painful than the rape of a nation.

And the soft sea air that permeated each house and inhabitant prest into grain and pore a sense of shabby gentility borrowed from outmoded novels, a physcial mist of indigenous disorder and ugliness and forever a spiritual awryness.

The failure of Malibu was like the failure of a bad joke.

* * *

The oddly shaped and queerly constructed houses that line the beaches of Malibu are billboarded as Twenty-Five Miles of Scenic Beauty - apparently the work of someone who had never been to Malibu. The intorted houses resemble nothing so much as brooding insects from another world. The impression is heightened by the thick black pilings that supported the houses above the beach, and most of the piles set at crazy angles.

And underneath all of them could be seen hap-hazardly hung plumber's tape supporting plumbing of varying diameters. Here and there cross-members that had not quite reach their intended joint had been made dubiously servicable with short pieces of two-by-fours nailed to

them. Flimsy, impermanent, lath and plaster construction, and plywood that warped in the salt sea air. Typical Southern California construction, and referred to by the inhabitants with a suspicious naivety as 'homes'.

There was something pathetic about the houses dotting the grevious beach called Malibu - reflexions of moribund aspirations, and expressing with a sereptitious air the mystery of that something that is really nothing; a furtive air of the last morbidity, under which all who dwelt suffered the secret knowledge of eternal meaninglessness.

The houses along the beaches of Malibu were the work of men and women circumscribed in minds and souls, and their human narrowness and meaness hung above them all with all of the unspeakable spleen of a Nebraska Sunday afternoon. An honest and happy expression of glee and gladness would have shocked the spirit of Malibu, a spirit that oppressed the air and rendered all coulour and beauty from it; pressing upon the discerning spectator a suggestion of something more terrible than the accepted view of the terrible.

Malibu.....ungraced by passion, peace, or even decay.

* * *

There are always parties going on at Malibu, and the parties at Malibu are ever and essentially drinking parties.

Only the most naive attended them expecting to encounter the nervous aura of original minds at play, the flashing of the mignon gesture, the casual dropping of the liquid epigram, the thought perdurable. Talk would not traffic in the merchandise of legend or even reality, but would be the lavender lispings of gritty little minds, harrowingly impoverished, lacking both grace and bitterness. When one did hear the rare, comet-tailed remark, one recoiled instinctively, as though one had been decorated by an happy accident.

The parties at Malibu were barren affairs at best. They had nothing of service, sacrifice, or even common interest to endue them, unless a precocious concern for private egos could be deemed a common interest. Even the casual fellowship of mutual minds, mutual creeds, or even mutual sex was denied them. They created neither pleasure nor delight - an alcholic epitomé of futility, the incongruous clanships of the insecure.

The parties at Malibu were never concerned with the full-flavoured things of life - only with the misgivings of uneasy egos, inarticulate envy, perpetual pretense. How eagerly they gorged themselves on this pemmican culture, piling up restless nights of emotional dyspepsia. Butterflys reflecting the fluttering, restless, insecure peripherii of show-business, supporting with fanatical zeal the latest pitch in the

Jesuitry-In-Advertising: feverish minds that fed on the fatuous and the innane, without nourishment, and even having the modern poet's eagerness for the commonplace.

One attended a Malibu party expecting to be drowned in a continuous soapy murmur of talk, a sort of perpetual oral diarrhea that flowed endlessly and erratically. One was never bruised by the whisper of great wings flashing; one was never exposed to the bitter, blind restlessness of a generation reaching above and beyond the commonplace for a moment of light, of love, of beauty. All in life that matters not one jot is remembered and celebrated at a Malibu party.

The parties at Malibu - the triumphant gestures of thwarted and damnéd people who really don't matter.

* * *
* *
*

KISMET

They do not listen to the starlings -

They hardly look at the fields;

Mankind has not changed since Yesterday,

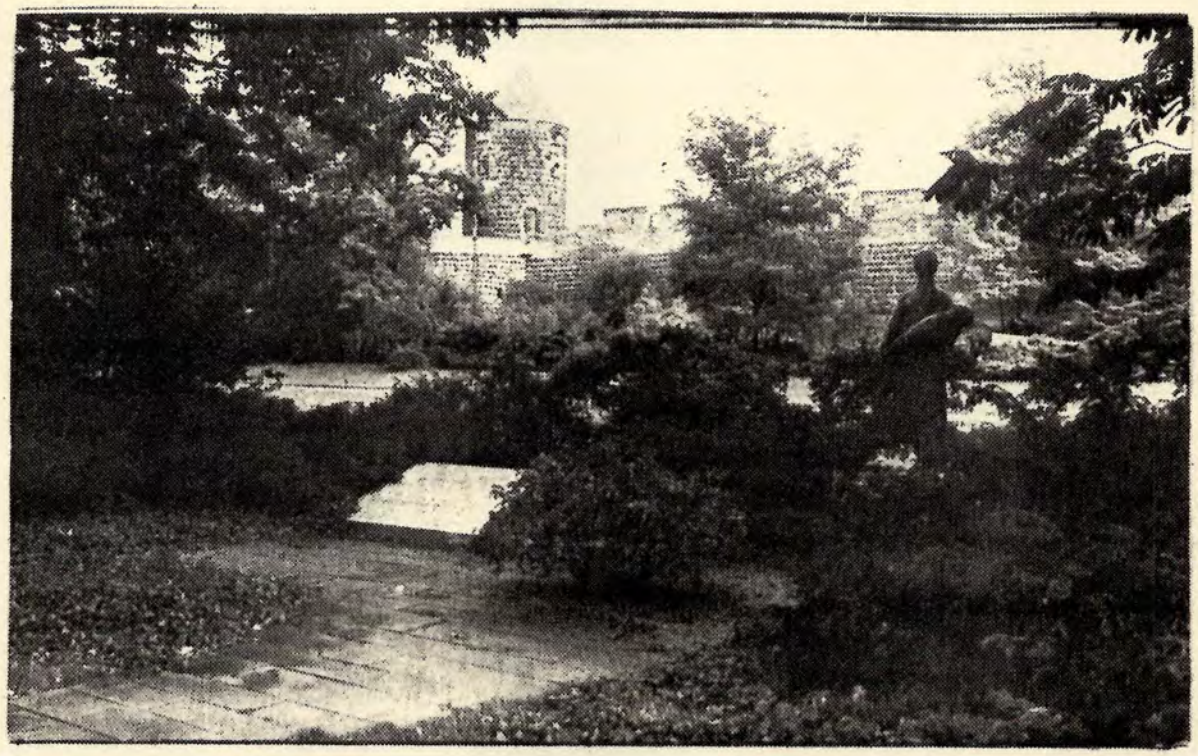
And the milk has got sour from standing.

* * *
* *
*

The PARK
WHERE
NO CHILDREN PLAY

One of the more rewarding features of wandering around most any old European town is the plethora of parks and unexpected little expanses of growing green-stuff. Cologne is not different, and there are many parks to walk through or rest in. In the main, they are usually well-kept, neat, and always green. I have walked through most of the parks of Cologne over the years, and appreciate them all.

On one of the typically grey days that seem to descend upon the town during every Photokina, I decided to walk back to the hotel by a different route than I usually followed. While it is practically impossible to get lost in the city, once you're aware of the circular nature of the rings, or streets encircling the city and all ending-up at the Rhine, I was at ease with the notion that I knew where I was.



But apparently I didn't, for I abruptly realised that I was in a neighbourhood new to me, but I kept on walking. I came across a small park that was unfamiliar and immediately turned into it. The first thing that struck me was the fact that the park was quite deserted. This is most unusual for any German park. (Later in the week, when the sun was shining, I returned to the park, and it was still devoid of people; and I never learned why.)

The only fixture in the park, aside from a row of unused white benches, was a statue erected next to a large concrete slab. The statue was of a woman holding up what was apparently a dead child. The statue seemed unfinished, like something by Rodin. And like most of the many statues to be found in Cologne, its surfaces indicated the over-head flight of many pigeons.

I reached the slab and saw that it bore an inscription in Latinized German, and proceded to read it:

HIER RUHEN
SIEBEN OPFER DER GESTAPO.
DIESES MAL ERINNERE AN
DEUTSCHLANDS SCHANDVOLLSTE ZEIT.

"Here repose
Seven victims of the Gestapo.
This monument is to draw attention
To Germany's shame-filled time."
1933 - 1945

I began looking for other references to the seven victims in other parts of the park, but the empty white benches and the statue were the only things to be found. The victims obviously had to be people of merit to have such a monument erected, but who were they? - what alleged crime against Hitler's never-never land had they committed? - and who were the compassionate ones who had erected the monument?

Naturally, I raised these questions with my German friends, and was surprised when even the native-born were not even aware of the little park where no children play. None knew of its existence, let alone the statue and the slab, with its puzzling inscription.

Later on I contacted the Cologne Archives and also the Tourist Bureau and raised the same question, and again I met with no success, which puzzled me even more. In all, however, it remains with me as a meaningful testament to man's ongoing faith in the ultimate good of the human experience.

One thought suggesting another, I am reminded of a statement by the beautiful Burmese actress Win Min Than, which was:

"You in the West bury your dead in your hearts;
here, we bury our dead in the ground."

Despite the obvious and sometimes blatant affluence of modern Germany, I am beginning to believe that the only truly and openly happy Germans are the children, quite numerous, seen playing in the numerous parks of Cologne. Parks are usually taken over by children, governesses, and oldsters. Perhaps our jet-propelled sociological ferrets could make something of that, but I record it simply as a fact of observation.

This is not a new phenomenon but would seem to be in keeping with the history of the adult German psyche - happily, unknown to the children. Even in the midst of plenty and security, the most well-off German still cries:

Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt,
weiss, was ich leide,
allein und abgetrennt,
von aller Freunde!

"Only he who knows longing knows what I suffer, alone,
and separated from all joy!"

The cry was sounded a hundred years ago and earlier still by no less a personage than Goethe, but the question remains: *why?*

There is very little literature on the sociology of city-parks to be found in any Western country. I have looked for it over the years and have been impressed by its paucity. In the late Thirties Stuart Chase created a monumental series of uniform volumes on the sociology of big city architecture, modern tribalism, and even made passing references to city-parks. I have sometimes wondered at the sociological implications of parks scattered across Europe and England during the 19th century. I have wondered if they were, in some metaphysical way, everyman's subconscious aspiration after the implications of Louis XIV's famous deerpark...

But German parks remain, in some ineffable way, German parks. In thinking about this, I am reminded of an expression I've heard many times anent German architecture (and always was it from women) and foodstuffs, clothes, public attitudes, and such. The women did not know each other, and came from several social levels, but their expression was exactly the same, and even with the same emphasis:

"Es ist zu deutsch!" (It is too German!)

I naturally sought what was precisely implied by the expression but with no success at all. I only confused my friends when I enquired after its implications.

The Germans I have met, and particularly the natives of Cologne, like their forebears, yearn to pursue the unattainable, to encounter the unforeseen. This is romantic, obviously, and has long been reflected in the German taste for the picturesque, in their plastic arts, the emotional evanescence of their music. From one point of view, I suppose, it might be deemed a form of rationalised masochism, for, like the tragedian in a never-ending Russian play, they seem to prefer to suffer and suffer and suffer, while holding fast to and sanctifying their Pyrrhic struggle to be *German!* - stoutly maintaining that their role is historical, infinite, divine - and above all - Absolute!

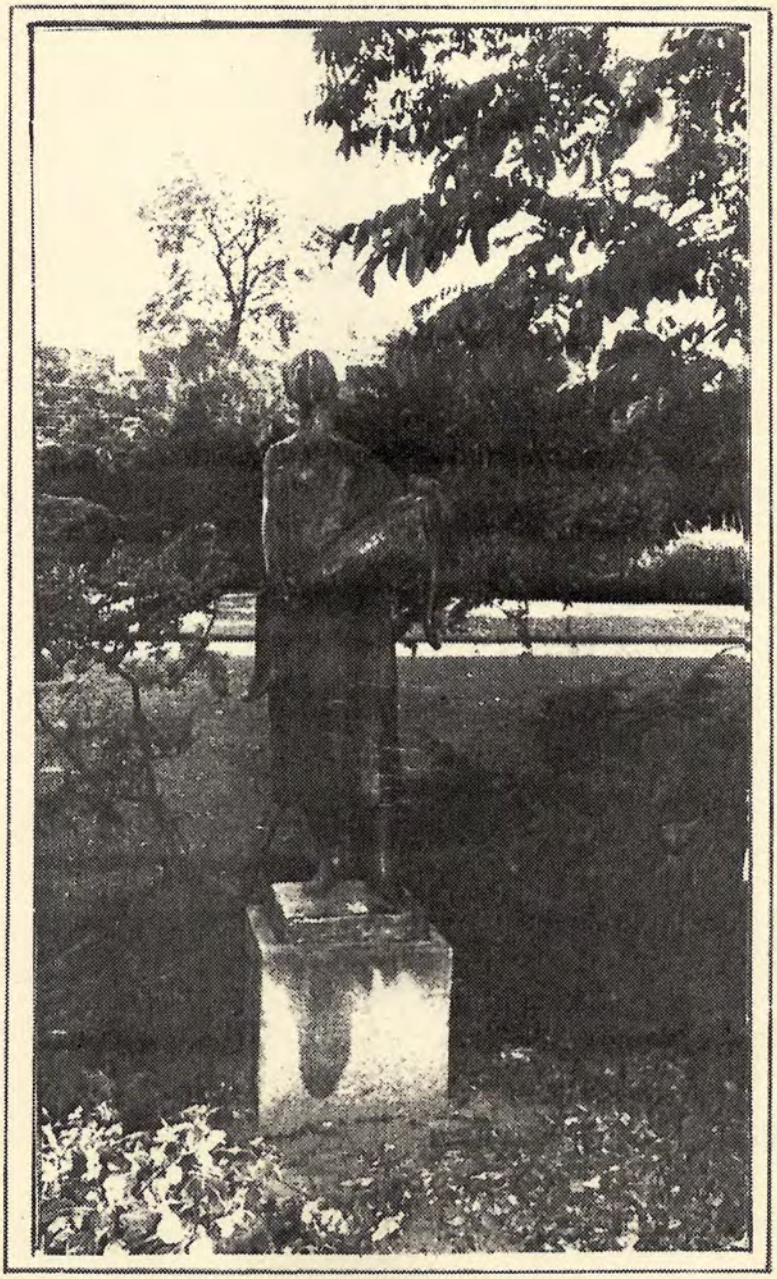
Such patent ambiguity is also their hall-mark, for without the eloquent mythology that has historically supported it, such a penchent would have long since bent the knee to the reality of the world. To view the world through an aberrative prism of one's own making, and then to define the prism as the world, is to retract the first act of intelligence.

This is an ultra-sophistication, naturally, yet it is this ultra sophistication that is the historical basis of German philosophy (originally borrowed from non-Germans), and is also the thesis of Kant's *Critique*. What has this to do with a German park in which no children play? Perhaps nothing; perhaps everything, for I long ago learned that there is no single aspect of modern German society that can be studied with an eye to making it symptomatic of the whole. Any approach to the modern German psyche must be a total synthesis of all that is known, and knowable.

Thus, my comments on a park where no children play fit into

the task I have set for myself down through the years - the task of seeking to comprehend and understand and render communicable the modern-yet-antique German psyche.

* * *



ADDENDUM

Four years after I wrote the preceding item I was again in Cologne, and I naturally went looking for the park where no children play. I was startled to discover that the statute of the woman holding aloft the dead child and the concrete slab speaking of Germany's shame-filled time had been completely removed! In their place was a bricked-in circle about ten feet in diameter, with concrete benches placed around the periferi. And when I made enquiry of friends, all professed total ignorance of the revamped park.

* * *
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Keeper of Fragile Things

"The genuine writer does not need the fevered and empty publicity given toothpaste, sanitary napkins, or sex-novels by women. The authentic writer only wants his work read by those people who want to read it; and if there are only one hundred of them, it is enough to keep his work alive and sustain his creativity!"

- Anaïs Nin, 1939

In the world of Letters, the name of Anaïs Nin will immediately conjure mystical imagery at merest mention. Her *Diary*, in its many volumes, is probably the most famous unpublished literary work of the Western World.

Her writings have long been regarded as a sort of alembic between the Dadaesque restlessness of the past few decades, and the Surrealists' talk of articulated dream-and-symbol. Deeply in sympathy with Breton and his doctrines, she never-the-less found him unsatisfactory, and withdrew into a phantasmal world of mind from which she has

occassionally spewed forth magnificent and argent phantasmagorias of privately brewed dream-and-symbol.

Like Henry Miller, she has single-mindedly established a new direction in literature, but while Miller strides gayly across the putrescence of our ungraved literary cadavers, Nin has wound westwardly, down paths of bramble-fruit which only she can chart and traverse again.

With her recent publication of her latest hand-made book, her *Under A Glass Bell*, she told me that it marks the end of her habitation in the world of isolated dream, that she is now forever passed out of romanticism, mysticism, neurosis, into Reality. Considering the stories *Birth* and *The Mouse*, this would appear to be amazingly true in the full light of their intended objectivity. While I, personally, feel compellled to reserve judgement on her declared intentions, the results of her new phase, if the word will remind no-one of Picasso, are yet to be seen. It would be a minor literary tragedy if, with her new awareness of Reality, she forbears to publish the *Diary*.

The *Diary*, now in its sixtieth volume, is Nin's microscopic interior monologue over a thirty-odd year struggle to realise her Self. It is a monumental confessional, so to speak, and its very giganticness is quite apt to blind one to the active life which she lived so intensely all around its creation. Its significance must be considered to rest in its *humaness*. In the eerie glow of our dying literary experience, its potential importance blazes that much brighter, as a human document.

Miller has written of the *Diary* in a rather long, well-constructed piece in his *The Cosmological Eye*, and he has read more of the volumes than I, and probably his most significant comment is:

> *"The Diary is full of voyages; in fact, like life itself, it might be regarded as nothing but voyages. The epic quality of it, however, is eclipsed by the metaphysical. The Diary is not a journey towards the heart of darkness, in the stern Conradian sense of destiny; not a voyage to the end of the night, as with Celine, nor even a voyage to the moon in the psychological sense of escape. It is much more like a mythological voyage towards the source of life. I might say an astro-logic voyage of metamorphosis..."*

Parenthetically, I might mention that the above extract is a good example of Miller's style when he is not vulgarising the language.

The *Diary* was commenced when Nin was 13, and the following few lines have been taken from it, translated from her exquisite French:

> *"When not any noise can be heard, when night has covered the great City with its dark, great coat with which it hides the*

deceitful splendour, then methinks I hear mysterious voices which call to me; I suppose that it comes from myself for it thinks as I.....Methinks that I seek something, I do not know what, but when my free soul is released from the powerful clutches of this mortal enemy, the World, methinks that I will find what I want. Will it be oblivion? - silence? I do not know.....

"In my earthly life nothing has changed. In the life that I lead in the infinite, that is different. There, all is good and sweet, for it is a dream. There, there are no schools of dark classes, but there is God. There, there is no noise but the solitude which gives peace. There, there is no disquiet for the future, for it is another dream.....Here is the infinite where I live, for I live twice. When I die on the earth, it will happen, as it happens to two lights burning at the same time; when one goes out, the other relights, and that with more strength. I will go out on earth, but I will relight in the infinite....."

I respectfully suggest that a child of thirteen writing such exquisite imagery compels one, with a driving compulsion, to read the works which have been written since by the mature woman, the mature and highly organised artist.

If Miller uses a claymore to hack away at moribund literary forms, Nin balances a rapier against nothing, except, perhaps, the dulling insensitivity of everyman and his wife. Her books are written in the language of larval thoughts and neurotic images, the images never completely divorced from their dream-content. One may easily be reminded of the consumptive music of Chopin, the irony of Huysmans, the perversion of Tchaikovsky. No-one can read her writings and remain unmoved, or return to a state of mind that was before the reading.

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"NIGHTWOOD"

DJUNA BARNES
(1919)

Soirée

While much speculation preceded that historical soiree, only three facts were known, and because they were unalterable, were always mentioned first, the better to dispense with them so that the conversation could plunge bravely into the northern regions of personal conjecture - which somehow was always more imaginative.

The facts were these:

1. For the first time in seven years Charlie Studen was to stage a soiree in his grand old manner;
2. Djuna Barnes, the fabled writer of Nightwood and early scandaliser of society, was to be guest of honour;
3. The occasion was to be utilised to launch Anaïs Nin's new hand-made book, Under A Glass Bell.

If it is true that the literary bent of a lad of twenty and one is formed as much by the words of friends as by his own instincts, then my desire to meet Djuna Barnes owed its conception and flowering to Anaïs; for not only has she shredded many a winter's evening with strange tales of the woman (whom she had yet to meet), she had also seen to it that I had read Nightwood long before Nero-Jimmie Laughlin excruciatingly rationalised his re-printing of it.

Studen I barely knew, having met him but a few weeks before while indulging in that old-fashioned Sunday past-time - a stroll in the park. Anaïs and Ian Hugo had flanked him as he strolled heavily but brightly by the Salamagundi Club. Anaïs hailed me, introductions were made, and for awhile we were all ankle-deep in small talk. All I knew of him at that time was that he had swept unheralded out of Sherwood Anderson's great sweeping land, was a barrister and solicitor of quaint fame; that he was friend and counseler to numerous followers of the aesthetic experience; and that he had but recently been retained by Greta Garbo to insure her desire for privacy, even though it meant the eviction of an entire building (owned by her) on the Upper East Side.

As I passed on, my paramount impression was one of a large and genial man with something wistfully archaic in his manners and his vocabulary; and who seemed to be as impressed by Anaïs, the woman, as I had been impressed by Anaïs, the writer.

A few days later, while lounging in Anaïs' cathederally dim and Dalìesque flat atop 13th Street, I listened indifferently while she

spoke fervently of the genuiness of Studen's interest in the arts and artists. My improper attention probably upset her, for she repeated herself now and then, but I did not remind her, for I simply liked to listen to her adroit modulation of the language of the Sassenach.

My interest centered on Barnes, not Studen, and when one is young and self-centered - as youth has always been - my interest prime, as Michael Fraenkel used to phrase it, obliterated all other considerations. So I listened in silence to the familiar voice-orchestrations of Anaïs, marvelling again at her supreme mastery of the subtle gesture, the tacitly implying pose, the measured quiver of a sooty eye-lash, the hushed, excited tone and foreign accent that came and went as required.

She fluttered around the spectral chamber, petite, supremely chic even in a lounging robe, her delicate hands forever speaking of their owner's control. Her wide and wistful eyes would now and then drown themselves in their own wonderment.

In retrospect: what a mania she had for play-acting. With her talent for self-dramatisation, we Irish simply aren't in it. Anaïs Nin - a fabulous creature of her own making, and if she never learned to slice the ham thin, it well may be that she has never had need to.

Then, I was intrigued by the totality of the Paris Crowd.

Then, Anaïs and I shared a common language made precious by its exclusiveness.

"We're caught-up in the same rhythm," she used to say.

The people and works I encountered through her all allowed me as a writer - or at least, an aspiring one - a greater realisation of myself, for that was the period during which I was seeking the whole of life, in a new meaning and rhythm and above all, new ways of using words! I suppose that latter concern was what first attracted me to Henry Miller and his lyrical obscenity, but that's another tale. And it was because of Anaïs, although she always denied it, that Lil and I received one of Studen's prized invitations to the Barnes soiree.

Living but two blocks away at the time, Anaïs and Hugo stopt by our place so that we could invade Studen's flat together. While Hugo was sampling some of my very ancient Malmsey, he turned one of my unfinished canvas s upside down. The effect upset me, but no-one seemed to mind, Anaïs remarking that the composition - a seascape at night - was more "interesting". I sought to divert their obsessive interest in the inverted painting by mentioning that I had sold a literary essay to the *Southern Review,* and a couple of technical articles to *Aeroplane* in London - for dollars, not for glory. Finally, the candle sputtered out, and in the rushing darkness, I restored the canvas upright.

Anaïs suddenly remembered the four crimson-backed copies of her new book, still clutched in her delicate little fists. The copies were of a special imprint, aesthetically more satisfying that the general printing, and the engravings were in colour. Like all combined efforts of Anaïs and Hugo the books were neat and pleasant packages. She offered me a copy, properly inscribed, for $20. Subsequently, together with three other volumes by Anaïs, I traded the book for an apartment on East 68th Street, in my first excursion into that alien world north of 14th Street, but that was much later on.....

Studen stood in the centre of his foyer, completely dominating it in his semi-formal attrire, his brightly brushed grey hair, his exploding generaous nature. Behind him I could see two kitchen tables which had been turned into service as a bar, from which a coloured couple with deftness, silence, and quiet dignity, kept an endless flow of alcohol circulating.

I spotted Harry Brown, an under-sized, petulent chap in a Canadian O.D. uniform, resting on his 23rd vertabra across a sofa. A pair of social butterflys flanked his disgruntled form, spending the evening in whispering into his grim ears, but not once did I see the frown flee his face. He had just attracted attention with his book, *A Walk In the Sun* and like all writers who are finally touched by the mercantile madness of American book-publishing, he now presumed to speak for American Letters. He was surly and boorish all evening, and when he finally left, trailed by his butterflys, no-one noted his passing, save, perhaps, Studen and myself.

Edmund "Bunny" Wilson, Clifton Fadiman, Paul Rosenfeld, among other literary lights were to have come, but Paul was ill, and the others did not show.

I had not, at that time, met Wilson, and had looked forward to doing so. He was the first American critic of stature to first turn tolerant print to Anaïs' service in the pages of Ross' *New Yorker*. His eventual and final judgement of the Paris Crowd struck me as more-or-less inevitable, but I've often wondered if anyone else has ever noted the subtle echoes of the Paris Crowd in Wilson's *Hecate County*.

Fadiman had once felt compelled to cleverly discount rather than damn Miller, and, while he generously sent me a copy of his review to help me in a piece I was doing on Miller, I've often felt that this sauve pontificator of questions had lost the touch he exhibited when, as an under-graduate at Yale, he translated a bit of Neitzsche with talent.

Oscar Williams, the pint-sized poet, balanced himself delicicately in his deep purple loafers, sporting a mauve beret, which he wore constantly, faun-coloured slacks, and a striking magenta sports-shirt.

He peered myoptically through his extraordinarily thick glasses at the assemblage, a faintly predatory smile walking restlessly across his rather full-blown lips now and then. His wife, an equally weird creature, bounced around like a stringless puppet in an emerald green ensemble, horn-rimmed glasses, low heeled shoes that had fringed external tongues, and a striking set of French-bangs.

There were a few other minor aesthetic asses, without which such affairs are denied even the illusion of validity; and as the evening progressed there were sudden outbursts of high-pitched gaiety that did startle one momentarily, suggestive of nothing quite as much as children crying out to articulate their fear of darkness, although in this case it could be categorised as an urbacitic and pathetic loneliness. There was a veritable ocean of febrile, intense conversation that never bored the speakers, and each seemed to have his own private alchemy for forging Gautier's hard, gem-like flame; making copious use of the kindling power inherent in martinis, old-fashions, and straight whiskey.

One knew without listening that all the proper names were being mentioned in divers tone and temper, from Mr. J.C. to Riza Terfik. The wonderful durability of those magic names!.....how many pseudo-soirees have they attended, uninvited, uninspired - and have out-lived, down the filose history of minor arts and incorporeal artists!

A dozen-odd people milled about, and by their poses and their utterances did they admit membership in that strange and dying social sport - the "international" aesthetical experience; that group devoid of meaning or purpose, social resting place, or even nationality. Once, in the course of the evening, there occurred one of those queer, sudden, inexplicable silences which decend upon such groupings. It was startling and obviously disturbing, and from the preceding great mouthings of wordy thought not even the echo of a whisper was perceptible. It was rather harrowing proof of our utter desolation and our phoniness.

Formal introductions were pleasantly lacking, so I knew dim wonder when Studen made a point of introducing me to Djuna Barnes. I heard him mumble something about George Moore and my father being cousins, and realised that Anaïs had undoubtedly mentioned that to him. Djuna smiled meaninglessly up at me, making vague motions with her free hand, the other one clasped firmly around a martini glass. She said nothing, looking everywhere but at me. I smiled uncertainly, fumbled with my unlit pipe, shudderingly aware of youth and inexperience and ignorance: such is the power of imagination when confronted by a legend.

The serving girl paused beside us with a newly-laden tray and, while I declined, Djuna's spidery left hand slithered out, deftly put down her empty glass and plucked a full one from the tray, causing metallic little sounds to cascade around us from the pile of junk-jewellry she wore on her thin wrist. The maneouver was skillful, neat, adroit. I had

to mentally applaud a feat well done.

Her casual ignorance of my existence sent me prowling the esoterically spawned jungle of wordy abstractions that bounded from off the deep green walls. Once, on my way to the bath-room, a severely academic-looking young woman stopt me abruptly and imperiously demanded:

"And what do *you* do?"

"I work for a living," I replied modestly, and passed on.

Upon my return from the bath-room, it became immediately obvious that she had pssed on this startling intelligence. Here, as everywhere else in The Village, anyone who worked for a living was instantly suspect, looked upon as an interloper - worse, a *fraud!* Only Lil's quick diviniation of the situation and her practical good humour saved the day, for I had started in earnest to take a few of the unfraudulent guests to task. I smiled my thanks to Lil, who was sitting beside Anaïs. Looking at them, I realised in a rush the incongruity afforded by Lil and Anaïs side-by-side, as women. Lil's beauty was splintering; Anaïs' was imaginative. One had sought emotional clarity in far-off places and where life was bright with love; the other had fashioned mystic murlings for melancholy flutes, and only upon the Bourne where all things meet would their levels agree. In retrospect, thinking of Lil, a line by Lakmé returns:

"Oui, je veux retrouver ton souriri
Et dans tes Yeaux je veux revoir le ceil."

Still, to brood upon the chaotic manuscript of one's youth is to spell out syllables strongly inscribed in an adolescent and strangely bitter tongue. One arouses to sudden sobbing an interior voice that laments uninterruptedly - as another laughs - aloofly and alone.....

It was at this juncture that Djuna, who hadn't stirred from the hugh hassock upon which she was seated, reached out and tapt me regally on the leg.

"Young man," she said. "Come and sit by me."

Obediently, I toed another, smaller hassock beside her, knowing a callow smugness at the little gasps behind me, for Djuna had spoken to no-one all evening, not even Anaïs, to whom this meeting was to have been a monumental saraband. That I was doing an unpardonable thing in accepting Djuna's singular attention never occurred to me, but Anaïs' subsequent attitude left no room for doubt. To Anaïs, Djuna had always been something of an heroic, extremely gifted, larger-than-life personage. She had, in the past, written long letters to Djuna and had sent her a copy of her first book, *House of Incest*, from Paris around 1930. Djuna

had acknowledged neither, but Anaïs' regard had mushroomed over the years and I, knowing her rather well at that time, could see that she was violently distrubed by Djuna's indifference, now that they had finally met.

Retrospectively, I felt great pity for Anaïs' feelings, but at the selfish, wide-eyed, and absorbent age of twenty and one, I was secretly delighted in the fact that Djuna Barnes and I were squatting together on leather hassocks, ignoring together the hostility of the crowd all around us.

She began to tell me a tale concerning a pair of elegant chamber-pots and an escapade in which they had figured during her Paris days...they had belonged to Bonaparte, she said, describing in fiendish detail the picture in the bottom, their shape, size, glaze, and intent.

As she told the tale, pausing now and then to contemplate some secret interior image, I looked more closely, perhaps rudely, at this incredible woman whose early breath-freezing beauty had won for her three continents, to whom love was no longer an arcanum, for she had shredded it filose and formless with men and women, and with her slender fingers she had torn out plaster patches more conventional souls had used to mend the yoken matrix of their pseudo-morality. The only other woman to have cut such a swath would seem to be Lee Miller....

But this frail woman before me was disconcerting in her plainess, and my disappointment was almost a physical fact. It were as though this woman's life had been such a tangle of tears and terrible weeping that all colour had been rendered from her. Colourless - *mot juste*. Her eyes were bright, restless, evasive, looking at nothing. Her thin grey fingers beat a thousand Devil's tattoos on the side of the glass in her hand, the hassock, the air, her thigh.

On her uncollected mouse-coloured hair she wore a mouse-coloured fur hat shaped like an over-sized Turkish fez. An equally mouse-coloured stole, of really remarkable length, was draped indifferently across her thin shoulders, and, despite the jungle-heat of the flat, she would not remove it, though Studen offered to take it several times. Her dress I never saw, for she kept it covered by a great brown sack-cloth cloak, but her shoes did fascinate me for a long time - each had a neat semicircle of seven little round buttons arcing over each ankle. In brief, with her greyish skin and erratic little motions, her distressing plainess in the shabby elegance of thirty years ago, Djuna Barnes was both depressingly disappointing and, strangely, challenging.

Ploughing my mind more deeply, I brought forth all that I had heard or read of her, of when she ruled the aesthetic wastelands of Paris, New York, London; had madly sought the core of all human experiences; wrote brilliant little pieces on an interior reality peculiar to women -

which was what first attracted Anaïs to her name; and had casually dropt from the world's ken around 1930. She had lived like a recluse in an inner court on 12th Street in The Village, typed reams of copy daily - and promptly tore them up, She had violently yanked out her telephone so that no-one, for the mere expenditure of a nickel, could invade her privacy, and on and on and on....my thoughts ranging deeper into the myth that had been Djuna Barnes.

All at once I realised that the tale of the chamber-pots was concluded and smiled, she smiled, then abruptly asked:

"Who is that Parisian-looking wench?"

"Anaïs Nin," I replied. "She's looking forward to meeting you."

"Is that Nin? My God! - she looks so young, and I've been hearing about her all of my life!"

(Later, on the way home, I stupidly repeated this remark to Anaïs, thinking it would please her. Under normal circumstances, it undoubtedly would have, but because I had sat alone with Djuna for two hours, and Anaïs had not been able to present Djuna with her new book, she insisted that Djuna's reference to her youthful appearance implied just the opposite.)

Prompted by a sense of loyalty, perhaps, I said:

"She thinks highly of your work. She practically read your *Nightwood* to me word-for-word."

Djuna smiled vaguely, her restless eyes darting north and south. I persisted:

"She came expressly to meet you, and to present you with a copy of her new book. She sets them by hand, you know, and..."

The smile suddenly vanished and Djuna asked:

"Who is that man with her? - the quiet one."

"Ian Hugo. He was a pupil of Hayter's *Studio 17* in Paris. He illustrates all of Anaïs' books. The new book..."

"He doesn't look secure," she said, inexorably.

"He has a rare talent," I kept at it. "He surprised the instructors at The New School by attacking a copper plate direct instead of first laying out the design in wax. The books..."

"Who is the little man with the fish-eyes?"

I sighed and gave up. Meekly, I replied:

"Oscar Williams. He compiles anthologies of poetry. He considers himself a modern poet..."

"Whatever that is."

At this point another hassock skidded to a stop beside us, and Oscar Williams' wife jumped down on it. She held her legs stiffly in front of her, close together, leaning forward with her chin on her elbow, her unwavering eyes fixed in a terrible ecstacy on Djuna.

"Oh, God!" exclaimed Djuna, looking at her, then glancing swiftly away. "What is it?"

Before I could answer, Mrs. Williams said:

"I know you detest me, but I'm going to just sit here and adore you!"

"How did I merit this?" Djuna mumbled, in a stage aside. Then, abruptly, she turned to me and said:

"George Moore...mmm...your father?"

"My father's cousin," I corrected.

"Did I ever tell you...no, of course I didn't..."

Her voice disappeared and the noise of the esoteric jungle around us rolled on in meaningless decumans. I said:

"Djuna."

I wasn't addressing her, simply testing her name on my lips and tongue. Without looking at me she seemed to divine what I was doing for she said:

"Djuna - my name. My father invented it for me. A girl tried to use it once. I sued her - or, rather, Charlie sued her," and she smiled brightly in Studen's general direction.

Studen looked a little fine-drawn by this time, but he was struggling valiantly to keep the masque marching. I was suddenly jettisoned outside myself and the aesthetically steaming assemblage by the thought of what a bunch of inconsiderate bastards we all were - here was

Studen fighting a possible excitation and a bad heart, for the sake of some ill-defined Bohemia, and not one of these hot-house intellectuals gave a good god-damn about him. He was simply the instrumentality for the parading of their petty egos. That he was probably the only real person present, I did not doubt, for too often are the untalented prone to mistake the arty protestors as the artists. But just as we cannot out-stare our own image in a mirror, just so can we not stand back from the mystical mid-region of Bohemia, leaving Studen alone in his rather futile self-justification after the fact.

Oscar Williams was in a far corner holding a ferret-like conversation with a chap who wore a certain chaste and epicene air like an elphantine cloak. Brown had departed, as had the man and woman from Holt & Company - children's books, I think. I had met them before at the Washington Mews home of Eleanor Anderson - Sherwood's widow. Anaïs was surrounded by a group of mixed sex, including a couple of "queers" - which she always seemed to attract, wherever she was - and all wearing a kind of mutual bovine expression. None of the group I recognized, but if you are around Anaïs for long, you become familiar with that kind of facial expression.

Failing to catch her eye, deliberate on her part, I began to realise that I had really fallen from her grace because of Djuna's whimsical interest in me. This bothered me for awhile, until I caught the eye of Hugo. He smiled his little smile and I felt better; he, at least, understood what was taking place. I had long thought of asking Hugo to assist me in doing a small piece on Anaïs as wife, but I left for California shortly after the Djuna Barnes soiree, and when I encountered Anaïs in San Francisco a couple of years later, Hugo was no longer with her, and she seemed irritated when I enquired after him. Perhaps his father, who was a banker, stopt sending him money to stay out of Boston...

Djuna abruptly began her telegraphic delivery again:

"Did I ever tell you...? This happened in London, during the Kaiser's War. The paper wanted an interview with George Moore for its Sunday supplement. So I went to Moore's house cold - not knowing if the old buzzard was going to see me, or not. Still, I was a woman, and Moore was...anyway, his man said he'd find out if the mawster could spare me a few minutes...a few minutes, hell - the old buzzard was probably still in bed. His man came back...are you going to sit there and stare like that?" - this suddenly to Mrs. Williams, who gave no indication of hearing.

"He would see me. So, being with a very lovely American girl and knowing Moore's reputation, I parked her in a sweets-shop across the street, then went in. The room I waited in was huge and dingy. I don't think the curtains or drapes were ever opened - paintings of Ireland, huge, ugly, all over the walls - on the table was a collexion of all of

Moore's works. What a conceited prig he was!"

She paused there and stared blankly across the room. For the first time all evening I saw Djuna Barnes sitting perfectly motionless. Mrs. Willams remained statuesque. I signalled the waitress, lifted a martini from her tray, and exchanged it for the empty glass in Djuna's hand. She moved the glass effortlessly to her lips. Her eyes blinked, and casually resorted to her former restlessness. She went on:

"Moore came in wrapping an old horse-blanket around himself - he probably throught it was a robe. He came in flapping in old bedroom slippers, and his pajamas should have been laundered. What a dirty old man...well, I got my story, but that wasn't it. After it was over, I mentioned I could not accept his invitation to dinner, as I had come with a woman friend, and then I mentioned that she was American.

"'American?'- cried Moore, bounding up from his chair like a bitch in heat, his watery eyes lighting up like the beacon on Land's End. 'American, eh? - is she pretty? - most Americans are so plain, but I like American women - they're the easiest to get into bed, y'know'. And he pattered over to the dingy drapes and lifted them slightly, trying to see into the sweets-shop."

She paused, took a final swallow of her martini, stared straight ahead, and said:

"There was George Moore peering through those dingy lace curtains for all the world like an old bugger peering into a pair of old maid's drawers!"

Her head snapped back and she laughed, a series of little explosive barks. I glanced at Mrs. Williams: neither her expression nor her position had changed.....

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EASTER WEEK: 1916

The idea of a national Rising being led by a poet is not romantic - it is absurd.

Too much, perhaps, has been written about the Rising during Easter Week; much of it fiction; most of it fancy. While it is true that when Maxwell unwittingly shot the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic to pieces, with typical English stupidity, he produced the spark that finally ignited the long dormant flame of Irish nationalism; and five years later the Irish Free State came into being.

The Rising of Easter Week has been chronicled by many as a magnificent display of inherent patriotism, albeit its having been a magnificent failure. Patriotism is no longer fashionable these days, and the egocentric self-centeredness of the current generation seems to be quite incapable of even comprehending the idea of patriotism. Yet it is the only word to describe the unifying spirit that swept over Ireland after Easter Week, 1916.

The love of one's country is irrational, impulsive, unaccountable. The air of Ireland, the earth of it, the winds and the rains that sweep over it and the great sea that encircles it - all these have conspired over the centuries to ingrain a special kind of patriotism in the ancient Irish Keltic soul.

Irish patriotism has never been a question of social status or material possessions, but something that stirred equally in all men in times of great national stress. But it had become diluted and had lain fallow for more than half a century prior to Easter Week, 1916. Its sudden and savage rebirth came about, in the beginning of the aftermath of Easter Week, less from any national sense of crisis anent race and land and freedom, than from the blind brutality of the Sassenach that thrashed about in blind rage that the Irish should dispute their "divine right" to be in Ireland as lords and masters.

In earlier times, Ireland sent scholars and saints into the intellectual and spiritual wastelands of Western Europe, to fertilise them and make them fruitful. After the Famine, as a contemporary wit had observed, Ireland sent "bosses" to Tammany Hall in New York City. And in 1914 an English writer wrote of Ireland as "a brawling, whining, cadging, snivelling, O-Jesus-have-mercy-on-us disorder!" And the quiet tragedy of the time was that many an Irishman shared that view...

The Battle of the Four Courts, during Easter Week, was an

attempt, however pathetic, to return Ireland to the measure and the status of a dignified and honourable nation. It still has not been acheived, for free men rise by their own wings, even as the Phenix. Freedom has many faces, and for too many Irishmen, freedom became telescoped into a simple proposition - removal of the Sassenach from Irish soil.

But Ireland to be truly free, and not only free but Gaelic as well, must be freed from the bondage of Keltic romance, of politics, of religion, and the bondage of the full belly. The publican, politician, priest and poet must be off-set and controlled. That Irish writers of worth still feel compelled to flee Ireland's suffocating aesthetical narrowness is worth remembering - writers such as Shaw, O'Casey, Yeats, Joyce, for example; and of our own time, writers such as Edna O'Brien and Bernard Riordan.

On that Easter Monday, 1916, the Volunteers, led by Pearse and Connolly, Mineely and McDonagh, marched self-consciously towards Liberty Hall. They were preceded by little girls in Gaelic dress who wandered rather than marched down the street. At the head of the girls was a pale, tired-looking woman with set expression and compressed lips- the Countess Marckiewicz. Behind the Volunteers came a ragged group of men and boys, and a group of hungry labourers. Girls on the pavement jeered with vulgar epithets, and one male by-stander, who had obviously been enjoying his porter, was heard to say:

"Them lads 'ud run like hell if you were to point a penny pop-gun at them! If a peeler was to take their names, they'd be shiverin' with fright..."

Yeats loved Ireland from a distance; the Volunteers, in the generosity of their youth, marched in the company of the hopelessness of Ireland...

Little crowds began to gather first along Sackville Steet, buzzing with incomplete rumours and disbelief and uttering snide remarks. They spoke of "rebellion", not a Rising, and one woman declared:

"It's a quare day for it. The people'll not enjoy themselves."

On the roof of the G.P.O. were two large flags newly unfurled. One was green with a legend in gold letters; the other was a tri-colour of green, orange, and white. The gold letters on the green flag read: IRISH REPUBLIC.

By mid-morning people were everywhere, in a holiday mood. They had come out for an entertainment beyond their wildest expectations of week-end pleasures. There were no peelers in sight, and this fact began to slowly sink into the awareness of the crowds. They became uneasy when word was spread that a peeler had been shot outside the Castle.

From then on rumour begat rumour, and as they swept across the city they grew more and more improbable and slightly hysterical..... the Germans had landed in the West and were marching on Dublin.....in Kerry Lord Casement had been captured the day before.....the Kaiser's Navy had bombarded London and was in the Thames and the British Fleet was in total disarray.....

The crowd around the G.P.O. broke into slightly hysterical laughter when a cart filled with cauliflower and guarded by four Volunteers, rumbled up to the entrance. Ireland was in a fight for freedom with her stomach full of cauliflower.....

The Proclamation of the Republic had been tacked on a wall. The Gaelic inscription at the top of the Proclamation baffled many, leading to:

"What's that thing at the top?"

"That's Irish."

"I know that. What does it mean?"

"Begad, I don't know!"

Volunteers had taken control of Stephen's Green, and a few more were busily engaged in digging shallow trenches. On all sides of the Green were high houses, from which it would be easy to pick off any man who lay in those shallow trenches. Carts and motor-cars had been drawn across the street to make a barricade, and most of the gates had garden-seats and planks lying against them. There were branches torn from trees thrust through the railings. There was rumour that Countess Markiewicz was in the Green.

The new tri-colour suddenly appeared on the roof of the College of Surgeons. There was a light breeze and the flag fluttered now and then, but at its raising neither the watching crowd nor any Volunteer spoke or cheered. There were still no signs of the peelers or Sassenach soldiers, no authority anywhere, save that imposed by the guns of the Volunteers when taking over a building or ordering shop-keepers to close down their shops around the Green.

As dusk settled upon Dublin there were no lights in the street, no trams ran, and the crowds began moving homeward slowly and heavily and now strangely silent. A spreading sense of foreboding was replacing the earlier sense of holiday.

A hansom-cab was stopt near the hospital of St. Vincent de Paul by a Volunteer, who had ordered the driver to stop. The driver responded with an obscenity and tried to whip-up his horse. The Volunteer lifted

his rifle and fired. The horse fell, mortally wounded. The driver, looking startled, jumped down from his box with amazing celerity and swiftly disappeared. And during the night an occasional rifle-shot could be heard on both sides of the Liffey...

In the morning the streets again began filling with sight-seers, who wandered aimlessly, as though looking for a focus of their curiosity. Talk was of soldiers hurrying from the Curragh, from Ulster, from England. Stephen Green had been abandoned by the Volunteers during the night, and here and there dead men lay in stiff and grotesque poses. As the morning progressed, the paramount emotion of the people was expressed in expressions of resentment! - resentment against the Volunteers, against Sinn Fein.

Behind one gate of the Park a dead Volunteer lay, and the crowd had climbed the railing to gape and gawk. A youth suggested that the body should be brought out and buried, whereupon a middle-aged woman turned on him savagely, berating him, saying to let the body lie there and rot like the poor soldiers...

A little group of men and boys setting themselves against the greatest Power on earth in the interests of a people who did not desire their services.....they could not hope to win, and they had neither the gratitude nor the good wishes of their own people.....

More rumours began their wild-fire rampage after noon - the Pope had landed in an aeroplane, Dr. Walsh, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, had committed suicide, the Viceroy Wimbourn had been taken prisoner, the Orangemen of Ulster were marching to support the Volunteers under the leadership of Joseph Devlin!...and that Ireland was completely surrounded by German submarines...

By late afternoon, looting of shops began, spear-headed by people swarming up from the slums like locusts, siezing all they could find. They destroyed things in sheer wantoness, and one was reminded of the behaviour of the rabble in Paris after they had stormed the Bastille. One Sinn Feiner was heard to remark:

"I know we can't win a military success - but we'll remind the people that Ireland is not yet a nation and that there are Irishmen who are still willing to die for their country. They've become very English, but they're not altogether English. They've still some of the old Irish spirit in them, and we may quicken that. We won the Home Rule Act fair and by constitutional means, and the Sassenach have done us out of that. The Orangemen had only to yell, after taking Randolph Churchill's money, and London gave in. When we're beaten and those of us who are still alive, and surrender, they'll do the right thing - oh, yes, they'll put us down with great firmness, they'll shoot us as an example. When they do that, we'll win!"

As evening came an unsettling quietness descended on Dublin. It

lay uneasily upon the town until about nine o'clock, when it was abruptly and fearfully shattered by a new sound - it was abrasive upon the ears, it was startling.It was the sound of machine-gun fire. The soldiers of the Sassenach had returned to Dublin...

By Thursday, the Rising had not been put down by the soldiers. The city was full of dead and wounded men and women, and there was difficulty about burials. It was dangerous to be out of doors after seven. Looting was continuing, however, on an ascending scale, more furtive, because of the soldiers, but more daring.

One looter, before he was shot by a sniper, danced across Sackville Street, clothed in evening dress and carrying a lady's sun-shade. He had a Panama hat on his head; he was wearing thick-soled brown boots; and loosely tied around his waist were a pair of corsets. When the bullet hit him, he stopt abruptly, his arms still distended in his crazy dance, like a puppet suddenly bereft of its strings. Then he silently crumbled into a grotesque heap upon the greasy paving-stones.....

The north side of the Liffey exploded with fire, flames reaching across the sky, vast and red and terrible. It burned most of the night.

The next day the Rising collapsed.....and today, children north of the Liffey are still starving...for want of a dream..... .

* * *
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ELIZABETH
(1924)

1866 – 1941

"ELIZABETH"

MARY ANNETTE BEAUCHAMP
Gräfin von Arnim
Lady Russell
"ELIZABETH"

Marginal Reflexions On A Limited Literary Lady.

The year was 1866.

Europe was in an ongoing state of political and military flux; the War Between the States was creating havoc with the traditional agrarian social conscience; Africa was still the Dark Continent and Stanley was yet to be off on his historic search for Dr. Livingston; and Victoria ruled over an expanding empire..

The Seven Weeks War had begun in Germany, ending with the Battle of Könniggrätz; the capital of New Zealand was moved from Auckland to Wellington; Australia elected to abandon Free Trade in favour of Protectionism; Abul Aziz was sultan of the crumbling Ottoman Empire; and in Roumania, Count Cuzu was actually being kidnapped by his Congress and forced to abdicate.

In Ethiopia the Emperor Theodore began throwing British envoys into jail because of an imagined slight from Victoria, leading to Napier's entry into Africa and the subsequent subjugation of Ethiopa: Peru was joining forces with Chile to revolt against Spanish dominance - and in Sydney the well-to-do Beauchamp family welcomed another daughter into their circle, the last of six, whom they christened Mary Annette, and whom the world was to come to know as "Elizabeth", the novelist.

* * *

Autobiographical data occur in all of her strangely consistent novels, which is true for all novelists, but where the actuality is usually mundane yet still contains the seeds of drama, the authentic novelist will exalt those seeds. There is, hoever, always a risk in reading too much autobiography into passages which may have simply been created as a normal literary bridge from one scene to another.

The factual data anent "Elizabeth" may be brielfy stated: her family were moderately wealthy, moved from England to Australia where

Beauchamp enlarged his wealth, taking his daughters on annual European tours, as was the fashion of a certain class, to expose them to 'culture' and to remind them of their origins. It was on one such junket that they et Count von Arnim - one of the impoversihed nobility but a member of the Junker rye cartel then dominating Europe. He married her and they went to live in East Prussia for the next 19 years, during which time she bore five children - four girls and a boy. The boy satisfied von Arnim's need for an heir, and thereafter she stopt having children.

She had been educated after the fashion of her class, chiefly by tutors, a custom she carried into the early lives of her children. She became proficient in Latin, French, the Classics, dancing, singing, and not much else. She read voraciously and was adept at quoting from the King James version of the Bible. Her knowledge of German rested with the great German literature that had been translated, and when she was removed to Pomerania, by her own admission, it took her some time to master the synthetic German toungue.

When the Count died in 1910 she removed to England, the better to educate her children. She had an odd love-affair with Lord Russell, brother of Bertrand, whom she married in 1916, and separated from him in 1920, after a stormy relationship dutifully chronicled by the British tabloids of the day. She began producing her novels again and building more houses. Her novels appeared almost on schedule until a year before she died, in New York City at the age of 75. Her last novel, published the year before - *Mr. Skeffington* - considered by many as her most serious literary effort.

A kind of biography by "Leslie du Charms" - one of the Stone sisters and companion to "Elizabeth", appeared in 1957, which no-one seems to have read or remembered. It was not much of a biography, in as much as through it all "Elizabeth" remains two-dimensional and a bit too detached from normal reader sympathy. It was probably my disenchantment with Stone's efforts that caused me to have a go at researching the life and times of "Elizabeth".

* * *

My introduction to her works was quite by chance, as such things happen. I have browsed in book-stalls all of my life and will frequently buy a book because it has an imaginative title or a bas-relief cover or a reproduction of one of Harrison Fisher's elegant ladies. The title that caught my eye was *The Solitary Summer* and I casually bought the book without flipping through it. It had been written by an unknown authoress who simply signed herself Author of Elizabeth & Her German Garden - which meant nothing to me at the time. The book was added to my shelves, to be read at a later date. It reposed there for about three years - and then one odd Thursday when it was raining, I read the book.....

It had been a few years since I had been enthralled by a turn-of-the-century novel, and I read the book through at one sitting, then went back to certain passages - particularly those which treated of the German psyche, for which she revealed an amazing grasp for a non-German. That aspect had a strong appeal for me as I had just finished a three-volume work on the German psyche.

I then went looking for other novels by "Elizabeth", and in time I acquired all of her works. That I could not find a biography of her annoyed me for a long time, finally coming by Stone's inadequate work. She was not a handsome woman - women who are only five feet tall rarely are, and I was reminded of the earlier research into the life and times of Adela Cory Nicholson ("Laurence Hope") and had been surprised to see that she was rather short, unstriking, but with an interesting face.

Excluding her last novel, I found that the following works have an authentic literary, and for that matter, historical significance:

Elizabeth & Her German Garden
April Baby's Book of Tunes
The Solitary Summer
Elizabeth's Adventures In RÜGEN
Princess Priscilla's Fortnight.

Their significance, I feel, lies in this: all were written before 1910, and contain the essence of her literary skills, they completely defined the limits of the canvases for all her future work both in story-line and cast of characters; and her social commentaries were at their greatest insightfulness and had their sharpest and most tolerant expression. Everything she wrote after 1910 - the year of von Arnim's death - seems to have been bits and pieces of twice-told tales. This is not a critical condemnation, but should be kept in mind if one is to truly appreciate what this odd but talented lady accomplished with her miniature social canvases at a time when the world was bowing to such as Vera Brittan, "Victoria Cross", Flora Anne Steele, Kathleen Norris, Vicki Baum, Willa Cather, Olive Schreiner, *et al*.

From long exposure to and love for the authentic literary experience, one develops a critical faculty that is sufficiently objective for one to see clearly, in terms of that experience, even favourite authors or authoresses. One detects patterns, one begins to anticipate stylistic touches. And the more deeply one is versed in the social mores and tabus of the time in which a given writer wrote, the better one may appreciate how bold and original some of "Elizabeth's" earlier works were.

She not only set the pattern for all garden-books written after her first book - which was not a novel - but she touched upon themes which were not investigated nor developed as material for the novel by

Henning August von Arnim in the 1870's

Elizabeth and her three little girls in Berlin, 1896

other writers, male or female, until decades later.

Her works were less novels in the Jamesian sense than they were extremely lucid narratives of things seen, observed, felt, even though they were seen, observed, felt within a rather narrow class-circle. She was also the first Victorian to write about smells - the affluvia of unwashed dishes, unwashed peasantry, dogs in heat, horses, the barnyard. Even her later works, including those written in the Thirties, retained almost Prussian-like the format and rhythm of her earlier books. In a phrase, she created a particular and personal *genre* of story-telling, and never deviated.

As an aside, I might mention that in keeping with the fashion of her time and class, her children had private tutors in residence. There was a young woman from France to teach French, and several tutors from England, among them H.G.Wells and E.M.Forester. After the success of the *German Garden* book, Forester was overheard to snidely remark that the garden contained mostly lilac bushes - a remark that from that day forward caused a total silence between "Elizabeth" and Forester - even though she kept him on for another two years.

(Years later, in London, Wells - who fancied himself a ladies' man - attempted to become involved with "Elizabeth", without success.)

That the *German Garden* book was innovative and original cannot be gainsaid, and that it seems to have set the pattern for all future garden-books may account in some ineffable way the almost Prussian-like format such books adopt. I would doubt that that was "Elizabeth's" intent, but would also imagine that she was not displeased.

It is tempting to suggest that the ongoing faithfulness of her readers year after year made of her a cult-figure, but this apparently has not happened, happily. The neurotic introspection of Anaïs Nin, for example, and her projection of neuroticism onto all she met, led to a cult, few members of which really comprehend what Anaïs' writings were really all about. It took me several years of knowing Anaïs before I came to grips with the reality of her non-reality.

"Elizabeth", on the other hand, while obviously introspective, never delved too deeply beneath the surface of what she saw and thought. She seems to have lived on the surface of a rather placid life, perpetually naive - especially where men were concerned, perpetually believing that the limits of her own perceptions were the limits of the real world. This is suggested most forcibly after her near-collapse after her messy divorce from Lord Russell in 1920.

It was the fashion for many a Victorian writer to use a pseudonym, and quite a few used a single name, especially when writing to the

"ELIZABETH" AGED FOUR

Times. Why she chose "Elizabeth" remains a mystery, as neither she nor Stone ever made a reference to its origin. There was, in the 16th century, a certain Gräfin von Arnim named Elizabeth, but there is nothing in any of her 20 books to suggest that was common intelligence. It was reported, however, that in the presence of her cousin, Katherin Mansfield, she always felt small and intimidated, but no reason was ever given.

Speaking of contemporaries - the following expressions have been extracted from reviews of "Elizabeth's" books over the years, from contemporary literary media and book-reviews:

"...what a captivating book this is! - merry and gentle and sunny, whimsically wise and tender.....the quiet history of a woman's life that acts as useful tonics in our somewhat fevered existence.....a generous harvest of beautiful and poetic thoughts, together with keen observations of life, all of which are expressed in supple and graceful prose.....she has a depth of feeling, a sense of humour, and an impetuous and ardent manner that makes her chronicles thoroughly alive. Beside this

Nassenheide, a few years after Elizabeth had gone to live there and had made a garden

lovable book, other feminine essays on nature, literature, and life seem only tame and artificial performances.....as young as hope and as old as wisdom....."

In terms of time and place, such comments were in keeping, and contrast strongly with the fashion of book-reviewers today, who seem to be obsessed with snide phrases about most any author, always revealing the gross lack of literary perception and qualification on their part. "Elizabeth", in one of her more objective moments in the Twenties, once referred to her novels as being *"too thin-blooded"* - which may have been an astute appraisal or simply a remark we all make in order to have it contradicted by those to whom it was addressed.

If we consider "Elizabeth" as one of those women who lived out a life of successful narcissusism, as a woman who thought of using men, in life or in her novels, as a means of feeling perpetually womanly, rejecting any serious demand made upon them as women, we might get a bit closer to the nub of truth of "Elizabeth". Her novels were limited canvases, as I have suggested, due to the narrowness of her themes and subject-matter and characters, as well as, perhaps, a genuine inability

to transcend the sharply delinieated world of the upper-class. However, to make the point, her's was not a *small* talent - simply a fascinatingly *limited* talent.

In her first five books her talent was operating at full force. She was then, and remained so, primarily and grandiloquently a narrative writer. An almost pathological spectator and recorder, but not really a participant; tenaciously observent with an ironical humour, and casually judging without ever placing herself in a position to be judged. This is in itself a rare talent. In those first five books her dissembling of the German psyche - both aristocrat and peasant - is nothing short of marvellous, and patently could not have been done had she been born German. Her later observations of the English psyche, while still acute, and on a much smaller scale, remain slightly sardonic rather than humourously tolerant - and non-participatory, of course.

Viewed over-all, it strikes one that her main characters, even though few in number, remain quite two-dimensional, despite their authenticity of speech and manner. Her so-called love-scenes are distinctly juvenile, and contrast disturbingly with the reality of other scenes. She filled numerous chap-books - reminding one of Anaïs Nin's *Diaries* - with passing thoughts and observations, which suggest a vital and driving intellect, if not profound, on the one hand; and an odd dislocation of any real identity, on the other - that odd dislocation of identity that is peculiar to exceptional or gifted people. To take mundane daily activities and by means of a bit of literary alchemy blend them into a flowing and interesting narrative, would imply a genuine talent.

* * *

Her deliniation of German peasantry was a bold and new kind of social commentary, something Victorians were not used to, and that may have accounted for her popularity. It is also possible, in seeking to explain the stark consistency of her style and story-line, that the enthusiasm of her readers and reviewers enslaved her to that style and story-line, although I tend to doubt it. After 1916 her canvases became smaller and smaller, and her brush-strokes could be anticipated.

The word "*leisure*" kept occurring to me as I moved deeper into her novels. When one has pursued with diligence the vagaries of the Literary Verb, one develops an instinctive recognition of writing that was done hastily, by rote and routine, contrived, as well as deliberate, scholarly, and crafted writing. With the exception of *The Pastor's Wife*, "Elizabeth's" writings may be casually described as stylistically leisurely. It would also follow that only a woman of independent means would have the kind of leisure to write in such a fashion.

Her preocupation with having her female characters constantly

stroking each other's hands in novel after novel could be a bit jarring, as it added nothing to the story, plot, or character. Was it such an engaged-in action by females of the time? D.H.Lawrence once wrote that to be touched is to be emotionally moved, but except for the pointed reference to the stroking of hands, physical contact is never mentioned in the novels of "Elizabeth".

From "Elizabeth of the German Garden."
Elizabeth in 1905.

There is a single and a great flaw in her novels, that just struck me. None of her novels, after the first five, ever ended properly! Her endings are all improbable and literarily weak. She seems to have simply stopt writing at a certain point. All of her endings are simply unsatisfactory. Something about her work had been haunting me for a long time, and in suddenly realising it was the endings allowed me a sense of relief.

Her particular awareness of olfact ry sensibilities was in itself a radical departure for Victorian novelists. She wrote of the distinctive smells of a German bedroom in the morning, of unwashed peasants working for her husband, the smell of a castrated dog, spoiled fish, and milk that had turned sour from standing. This was something new in contemporary writing, as all other novelists, apparently, assumed that the reader would supply his own awareness of olfactory sensibility from his personal awarenes of such in his own time and place. Louis Joseph Vance, a prolific and brilliant American novelist, remains the only other writer that comes readily to mind who referenced ambient smells in his work.

En passant, it might be mentioned that Vance was the most erudite of the then existing *cadre* of American popular novelists.

In the twenty novels of "Elizabeth" you will find but three sympathetic characters, and several who are quite unsympathetic. The three are the heroine of *The Princess Priscilla*, the two adolescents of *Christopher & Columbus*, and the narrator of *The Solitary Summer* - even though the second book mentioned does suffer badly from its utterly improbable ending, as though the authoress abandoned it in some sort of non-creative desperation, which does happen to all of us.

I would say, with convixion, that "Elizabeth" was a miniaturist, a beautiful narrative writer, and with a large tolerance for the foibles of those within her social stratum. The two-dimensionality of her main

characters present, in a sense, a literary sociology tailored to pre-determined situations. It is this two-dimensionality of her characters, drawn "from real life" as Victoria Cross was to write, that may be what makes them generally unsympathetic. One cannot relate to them as people, even though one may be quite in sympathy with the situations which they are adroitly involved in.

Whether it was deliberate or not, I have no way of knowing, but her heros were never handsome and articulate, her heroines were never beautiful and intelligent. Even in *Introduction To Sally* she repeats over and over that Sally was stunningly beautiful, but somehow one remains unconvinced that Sally was beautiful. The several clerics who run through the novels are treated with tolerant humour that just misses being cynicism, but her many biblical references emphasize her early and deep grounding in the Bible.

But to return to "Elizabeth's" seeming inability to properly end her novels, there is this: no ending occurs on a dramatic note nor is the reader left with any sense of completeness. While the slice-of-life form of the novel came into being during her lifetime, her novels are none-such. They are more a series of related moments serving as vehicles for her acute observations of the human condition within her ken. This may account for the weak endings, in that having reached that point, the reader is left with the impression that from then on more of the same will occur.

Since the time when Henry James defined the role and the future of the novel, its form has remained quite consistent, even though among so-called modern writers attempts have been made to generate new internal structuring. Joyce undoubtedly gave a mighty impetus to this, but far too many so-called modern novels are simply structural packaging for the sake of difference, not innovation or an advance. Such deviations from the traditional novel form could also be employed to cover-up an inferior talent. As they used to say: if you can do it, teach it!

The novel has always been fundamentally concerned with the sociology of its time and place, and after 10,000 years of recorded human history, basic human nature has not altered one jot. "Elizabeth" remained true to this precept throughout her career; it;s just that she never seemed to be able to create satisfactory endings to the situations she invented. Perhaps, that, too, was a reflexion from the mirror of her own life, as mirrors have no image of their own.

Another interesting oddity of her writings is that you come by a clear sense of the immediate physical world her characters move in - which isn't the same thing as saying the world they live in; and you can never come by any sense of the *times* in which they move. If you do not know prior to reading her novels the times in which she wrote, her fleet-

ing contemporary references will elude you, as none of them define the period of activity going on. While ignorance of her time and place was never a problem for me, it also suggests that her novels could not have been written in any other period of time. This, obviously, adds to one's appreciation of what she accomplished as a story-teller, as there was no-one of her time writing as she wrote. Unlike so-called modern novelists, and despite her novels being small but fascinating mirrors of her narrow world of leisure and privilege, she seems to have had no real sense of herself as an historical being.

There are several rather caulic references to the German psyche, which delighted me, but even those references do not convey a sense of the times over-all, no sense of the social forces and rigidity of customs which almost forced her characters to act the way they did within a social context. The reason one may be at ease with her pithy commentary upon the German psyche is simply that it remains exactly the same today.

While she references smells and dirt and mice and unwashed humanity and horses, she never mentioned streets or buildings or other contemporary guides to a sense of time and place. In her soirees, which are very sketchily drawn.even though she spent much time holding and attending such, there is not the almost mandatory novelistic references to *Kashmiri Love Song*, the Boar War, Ellen Terry, *Goodbye Forever*, or even Fleet Street - all of which could be found in popular novels of the time. Her drawing-room scenes, while valid, were drawn obliquely, nor was there ever a references to riding to hounds, punting on the Thames, polo, or even Ascot - all frenetic activities of her class at that time. Instead, we find never-ending references to teas and a stroking of hands among her female characters.

* * *

The following are comments in capsule form of literary criticisms of a handful of "Elizabeth's" novels, which you may find of passing interest, as well as the bases of some of my prior comments.

The Enchanted April was her first novel after her brutalising separation from Lord Russell, and reveals a slight shift in her conceptuality of the novel form. Her once leisurely sentences which had pointed up human foibles so deftly became short, still pithy in spots, but one senses contrivance here and there, lacking a certain lightness of touch, which could have been, of course, a residual effect from her disastrous marriage to Lord Russell.

She also seems to have laboured to add the missing dimension to her characters, but she may have laboured too mightily, as the four protagonists are, with an annoying peristence, simply unsympathetic. To ascribe nobel motives to a character in narrative form doesn't make it so. *The Enchanted April* also carries strong echoes of *The Caravaners*,

which blurs its lustre. Throwing a divers group of people together and then chronicalling their individual reactions to a mutually shared situation is an old and legitimate literary device, but to use the device more than once is to invite repetition of imagery and resolution.

The Caravaners is, with no contest, her most delightful and most sardonic indictment of the German psyche. It was published the year before Count von Arnim died, and undoubtedly contains much subterranian autobiographical material. "Elizabeth" was too obsessive an observer and recorder not to work the then-virgin vein of a British-Prussian marriage. If *The Solitary Summer* was an idyllic offering of all that was fine and noble in the early years of her marriage - and it may well have been - *The Caravaners* would have to be the reverse side of that proposition. Intellectual perversity has many faces, and when combined with a non-traditional female mind of talent, the results can be devastating.

It might be worth noting that after her deadly marriage to Lord Russell, she still used "Elizabeth". Other Teutonic authoresses, including the Queen of Roumania, were not adverse to putting their names on their work - although there was "Sylvia", of course, of whom Pierre Loti wrote so worshipfully before she was exiled to Rome with her court.

In terms of story-line, *The Pastor's Wife* is probably her weakest work, both structurally and stylistically. One's over-all impression remains that she had firmly fixed posits and concocted an rather artificial vehicle to convey them. Certainly, her heroine is the most unbelievable of any she created, and there is, again, nothing sympathetic about the characters. Probably the most compelling passages are those which speak of the heroine's dark dread being experienced at child-birth. It was very well-written, was a truly sympathetic passage, and she may have been writing our of her own child-bearing experiences.

It has been my observation that writers will sometimes write novels on the wind - *because the wind cannot read,* as Richard Mason once wrote - in order to resolve the world a bit closer to their heart's desire, to lay the ghost of an haunting personal problem or dream, dilemma, experience, protest. This is part of the mysteriousness of the genuine aesthetical experience, but there are occasions when such compulsive novels should never have been written. When Albert Halper wrote his very compelling *Union Square,* I was impressed enough towrite and tell him so. A desultory correspondence followed, and then one day he wrote *The Little People*. I was startled!! - as the story seemed grossly inferior to his talent. When I asked him why he had written it, he replied that it had helped him resolve a torturous love-affair. He also admitted to me that it probably shouldn't have been published.....

The ending of *The Pastor's Wife* is an O.Henry-type ending, clever enough in itself, but unsatisfactory because of the utter improbability of the conduct depicted. The painter remains one-dimensional

throughout the book and comes through badly. The incredible naivety of the heroine is a constant irritation. I remain convinced that "Elizabeth" had something personal to get out of her system, and she chose what was an obviously inadequate vehicle.

When the burden of conversation is put down in narrative form, even though it may be the fashion of the day, it usually impedes conjuration and relateability. Certainly, "Elizabeth" had the vocabulary and the life-experience to transcribe yards of normal, natural dialogue, as her intimate knowledge of conversational norms is shown in other places in her writings. The so-called affair of the painter and the heroine reminded me of Noel Coward's *Brief Encounter*, and I've sometimes wondered if Coward did not find his inspiration in *The Pastor's Wife*. Like that novel, Coward, too, seemed unable to fashion a believeable ending to *Brief Encounter*, despite his slick shallowness. Oddly enough. that remains the only work by Coward that ever appealled to me.

Expatiation was written ten years after her divorce from Lord Russell. In the parlance of today, in which trashy writings turning exclusively on sex are the fashion, the book would be classified as naive writing about the improbable consequences of adultry in high-society. The book is informative of the *morés* and tabus of the times, but it is not exactly entertaining. Yes, it did have echoes of what happened in her marriage with Russell. The ending is typical, which is to say - unconvincing. However, thinking of her as an obsessive recorder of the customs of her class - and her class must at all times be kept in mind when reading "Elizabeth" - one's respect and admiration derives almost exclusively from her sardonic, whimsical, frequently tolerant chronicalling of the customs of her class.

While frequent references occur in her writings to literature, philosophy, religious giants, not to mention poets (she seems to have been inordinately fond of young poets), more striking references occur to Wordsworth and Goethe, with even a couple of references to Marconi and the infamous *Kodak*. The camera, incidentally, she handled quite poorly when she was "snap-shotting" her dogs and her German garden. There is no mention of Freud, which may have its significance in the fact that several of her characters could easily have formed a basis for case-histories on jet-propelled couches. Actually, I feel, the greater significance lies in her quite psychological treatment of cause-and-effect in human terms, among the most adroit and penetrating of early novelists.

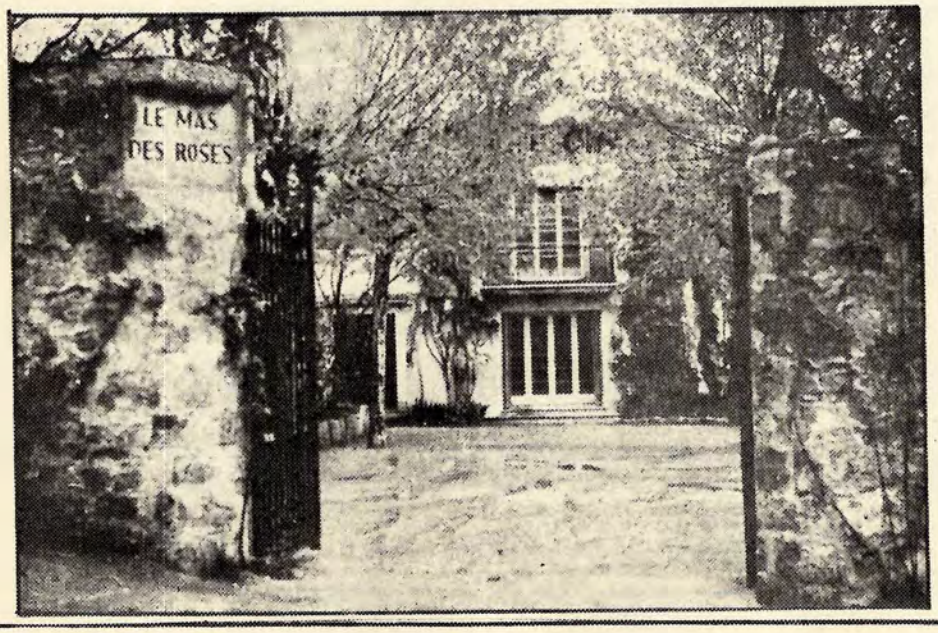
Probably the most brilliant instance of this is her profiling the cousin Charlotte (actually drawn from her older sister, Christine) whom the narrator meets after a ten year separation, in *The Adventures of Elizabeth At Rügen*. In *Father*, the deliniation of the main character shows less psychological insight than a kind of subtle reporting on the peccadillos of Russell, which may have given her some sort of relief.

The inexplicable naivety of speech, actions, reactions of all of

Chalet Soleil

"ELIZABETH" seemed to have had an obsession about building houses - and obviously had the money to so. She built houses in England, Switzerland, and France, two of which are shown here. The house above is where Lord Russell paid his domineering court.

Le Mas des Roses



her adult characters really cannot be ignored. She narrates the thoughts of her characters, and such are quite interchangeable between the sexes. The best example may be found in the middle-aged heroine who flits through the pages of *Expatiation*. With the adolescents of *Christopher & Columbus* she does much better, until the improbable ending.

One must wonder if, despite her superior education, intellect, perceptivity, she remained in some odd way perpetually emotionally immature as regards human relationships. None of her social reportage is profound, but it is striking in terms of time and place, and frequently original. Her limpid and lucid style of writing seems to have become a lost art among modern novelists. What a marvellous thing it would have been had she been able to express herself through the lens of a camera - even the ubiquitous *Kodak!*

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In her *Letters To Mother*, appended to later editions of the German garden book, one can discern germs of the story line for *Frl. Schmidt and Mr. Arbethnot*. Parenthetically, it might be mentioned that the letters were fictional, although they do reveal darting autobiographical references, as would be expected. The letters reveal rather strongly the precociousness of "Elizabeth" at an early age, and suggest the basis of her veiled snobbery and concretised feminity. The letters are an admirable vehicle for an immature but self-contained ego.

The idea of building a novel on a series of letters is not new, of course. Rather, it evolved during the last century from the vast collexion of letters exchanged between women, those who resided abroad throughout the Empire, and those who remained at home. Lacking the moronic simplification of TV and the banality of modern radio, the ancestral instinct for gossip (in the original sense of the word) and the sharing of even the most pedestrian of experiences, turned many a Victorian woman into writers of long letters.

The result has been that the collected correspondence of the last century is a treasure-trove of social, psychological, philosophical commentaries on all levels of society, and we should be grateful for that, as such permits us to know where we've been in order to know where we are. And while the word "gossip" has been rendered snide and malicious by modern news-media, its international aspect still offers a legitimate vehicle for social intercourse.

The *Frl. Schmidt* book was apparently constructed along the lines of what may be termed the inverted pyramid. That is, the novel begins quite fulsomely, then gradually tapers down to a point. This was the only novel in which the inverted pyramid type of construction appears. The idea is clever enough, but limiting, and the redeeming grace of *Frl. Schmidt* is what it reveals of the authoress.

In 1927 she wote *Christine* under the pen-name of Alice Cholmondley. It was not too popular. She also wrote a couple of short-stories under other names during the same period, but apparently they created no literary ripples. Nor is there any indication, in her letters or from any other source, as to why she chose the name "Elizabeth". While she was very close to her mother, as they say, there is no indication that her mother was the inspiration.

* * *

Mr. Skeffington was her last book and her most serious literary effort, in the opinion of many critics. It succeeds to a degree her other works could only hint at. While it still contained long passages of narrative, sensorial impressions, it did have a legitimate novelistic ending. The ending is surprisingly briefly sketched, considering all that went before it. Still, it is acceptable.

As in prior novels, in the end it is the woman who triumphs over the man, with her vanity untouched, intact, reinforced. The role of all of her male characters would, I've sometimes thought, merit a psychological study all by themselves. Intellectual arrogance must always be asserting itself, be centre-stage, while cleverly concealing itself behind the accepted façade of civility, humour, objectivity. And the kind of intellectual arrogance "Elizabeth" was captive to was strictly of the German kind, of neuter gender, applicable to male or female.

Mr. Skeffington is the story of an aging beauty who has traded on her beauty all of her life, and is suddenly brought face-to-face with the reality of old age. She goes seeking former lovers for re-assurance that the reality is false. The book is less a novel, less a story than the chronicle of a vain woman's monstrous self-pity. But while the heroine's vanity is placed as the medium that binds all of the episodic scenes, it is the authoress' intellectual vanity that comes through to the perceptive. In no other book does "Elizabeth's" concretised self-centeredness border upon pure arrogance.

"Elizabeth" may have, in her 19 years of isolation in the wilds of Pomerania, come quickly to realise that her own education, training, proclivities were superior to any about her; and nineteen years is long enough for intellectual abberations to be come concretised.

As in her other works, the reader derives no sense of the times in which the story takes place, only fleeting and bald references which only a student of social history would pick-up. Considering the time in which it was written - the middle Thirties - with dark forces patently abroad in the world does, in itself, suggest a certain self-centeredness that one would normally expect in the writings of Anaïs Nin. Both were in the world, but not of it.Despite her acute observations and pithy recordings of social *morés* and *tabus*, one must ultimately feel that she was always feeling a bit smug and quite superior to her characters.

Something about self-confessionals without the need for penitence....that "Elizabeth" was vain is obvious. That her snobbery comes through in her many letters is also demonstrable. It seems to have mattered to her that she could trace her lineage back to the conquests of Billy-Of-Organge (1066), and that in her family tree one could find dukes and duchesses, countesses, and a vicar here and there. The vicars were of High Church, a distinction she felt compelled to mention. While she was deeply read in the King James version of the Bible, as has been stated, she was not what would be considered a deeply religious woman, even though there are numerous references to God and Nature, used as though they were interchangeable terms, and who can say?

While she moved within the literary clique in London that included Henry James, and one might wonder what James thought of her novels, it is obvious that her novels were not plotted in the Jamesian style. Rather, they can be said to follow Noyes' ironical suggestion of O.D.T.A.A. - one damned thing after another. It is an amusing thought to take all of her 20 novels and string them together, using the same set of characters from the first novel throughout the twenty stories. I rather imagine that the reader would experience absolutely no sense of mental or emotional jarring, of abrupt changes, of interrupted continuity. The heroine of *Mr. Skeffington* is not one whittol different from the narrator of *Elizabeth & Her German Garden* - the Alpha and Omega of her literary career. I can think of no other writer whose works spanned 47 years who was so consistent, familiar, undeviating.

* * *

She seemed to adapt easily to most any place - or, rather, she seemed to have the knack of adapting a place to her own vision and ignoring any other. This encompassed her homes in Germany, England, France, Switzerland, the U.S. While her writings reveal moments of sociological brilliance unaided by Freud or Jung, she remained quite monolithic in her private conceits.

While references do exist to the fact that she was a strong-willed woman, an independent cast of mind when young, it would probably be more correct to say that she was stubborn. That she had quite strong, almost Germanic convixions of what was good taste and what was not, has also been documented by one of the Stone sisters. With the obvious exceptions of her affairs with Russell and the shadowy Mark, one may easily concede that she was a driven woman where her writing was concerned, and once she decided upon the role of writer, she never deviated from her view of it. It is unfortunate that her inept biographer was not more talented, more perceptive.

That there seemed to be inexplicable albeit momentary contradictions in her make-up, cannot be denied, but something remains miss-

ing from her life and her novels. Much of the butterfly is there, instantly attractive, delightful to behold, full of airy grace well-suited to the medium - yet somehow too insubstantial to grasp.

Even *Mr. Skeffington* still leaves the perceptive reader with an odd sense of something missing, something northern, glacial, *perdu*.

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THE WORKS OF "ELIZABETH":

Elizabeth & Her German Garden; 1898 *
April Baby's Book of Tunes; 1899 *
Adventures of Elizabeth At Rügen; 1900
The Solitary Summer; 1902
Princess Priscilla's Fortnight; 1903
Introduction To Sally
The Pastor's Wife
Fräulein Schmidt & Mr. Arbuthnot
The Enchanted April
The Jasmine Farm
The Caravaners
All The Dogs of My Life *
In The Mountains
Expiation
Christopher & Columbus
Love
Vera
Father
The Benefactress; 1901
Mr. Skeffington; 1939

(*) = non-fiction

The April Baby book is a factual account of her nursery, with illustrations by Kate Greenaway and reproductions of music sheets of simple tunes - a delightful little book that can be enjoyed all by itself. As of this writing, a copy of that book is offered at $100 by so-called rare-book dealers.

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KARMA

You were something more, love,
Than any maid could be;
And that enchanted Spring, love,
Died memorially.

I know not if you've grieved, love,
Nor have you known my pain;
But in many a foreign place, love,
The winds have known your name.

We could not make it last, love,
Dumb, we stood before it;
The world drew back in awe, love,
Fearful to explore it.

Spring, a babbling fool, love,
Threw a tattered mist
Upon our desperate hearts, love,
Dying when we kissed.

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This lyric verse, trite though its imagery may be, is worthy of note, I feel, in as much as it was written on my 16th birthday. I had never been in love, was still obsessed with mastering the language of the Sassenach - and - with this verse I felt I had finally secured control over the language, so I've let it stand as historical index of the maturation of me. The internal rhythm probably derived from Richard Lovelace.

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As has been mentioned, contemporaries of Elizabeth commented on the fact that she seemed to have been intimidated by her cousin, Katherine Mansfield. On the 31st of December, 1921, Mansfield had two letters posted, one to her father and one to Elizabeth. Nine days on Mansfield died of tuberculosis.

Her eveready compantion, Ida Baker, who had endured much of the Mansfield cynical and barbed wit, became companion to Elizabeth, as well as her housekeeper. However, probably after her many years of being "bossed" by Mansfield, Ida could not endure the same sort of treatment from Elizabeth, so she left to take a cottage in the New Forest. There she lived alone, and fifty years later wrote her own version of the life of Mansfield.

Mansfield's husband, Murray, a rather ineffectual literary dilettante involved with little literary magazines of the period, was a frequent visitor when Elizabeth was sojourning at Randaque. They had long talks together, and on week-ends Murray would visit Mansfield at the Hotel Chateau Belle Vue. When Mansfield, typically, grew restless under the "cure", she left Switzerland and returned to England. Murray stayed behind and took a small house up the hill from Elizabeth. He was always among her guests.

Elizabeth had first met Mansfield in 1909, when Elizabeth had left Germany after the death of von Arnim. They were aware of each other, naturally, and it was Elizabeth's German Garden book sent to the Mansfield branch of the Beauchamps in New Zealand that influenced Mansfield to become a writer, among other influences.

Their second meeting occurred in 1920, while Elizabeth was being legally seperated from Russell. Claire Tomlin, authoress of a recent new (sic!) life of Mansfield, said of that meeting:

> *"The two cousins surveyed one another with some curiosity. No-one would have described Elizabeth as a likable woman; her ruthless egoism mixed with sentimentality, a blend that characterised many of the Beauchamp clan, prevented that. But she had a great capacity for hard waork. She had borne five children, made a small fortune from her best-selling books, and emerged the victor in her struggles with two consecutive aristocratic husbands, living a life of bold disregard for conventions of wifely and maternal behaviour. When she visited Kathereen that last time, she was leaving for her Swiss chalet, where she habitually kept a young lover, and entertained many guests, A.S.Frere was one such young lover. Elizabeth seems to have viewed her sick cousin with genuine sympathy and admiration."*

PAUL ROSENFELD:

Voyager In the Arts

1890-1946

On the night that Paul was to die, we had shared some Irish tea in his rooms on 11th Street in the Village. An inveterate movie-goer, he had asked me to accompany him to the Sheridan movie-house over on Sixth Avenue. I had declined, as I was preparing to leave for La Jolla in California a few hours later.

While I am certain that had I accompanied him, nothing would have been different, but the whisper of an odd sense of guilt has haunted me to this day. I was the last of his friends to be with him while he was alive. I was in California three days before I heard of his death from an heart attack when he walked out of the Sheridan.

Several months later I was back in the Village, and made some direct enquiries of the people involved, such as the two doctors who allegedly treated him. The stories began to conflict, as newspapers had claimed that Paul had been stricken while inside the movie-house and that two doctors in the audience had immediately rushed to help him. This turned out to be patently untrue. In talking with the newsvendor who had a stand in front of the Sheridan, it developed that he had been an eye-witness, and his story created an immediate sense of helpless outrage.

The newspaper peddler had seen Paul leave the movie-house, start to walk away, and had collapsed on the sidewalk. People walked around him, no-one stopt. This went on for about twenty minutes. And

all the while, directly across the street, stood the grey and indifferent structure of St. Vincent's hospital. Finally, two white-coated men came out of the hospital and looked at Paul's figure on the sidewalk. Again an interminable waiting, and then sudden action. Shouts across to the hospital, two men running out with a stretcher, and bustling of Paul's small form into the hospital.

As I listened to the news-vendor's account, I was stunned at the stark indifference and gross inhumanity that had been displayed by people passing by and exitting the movie-house lobby. Naturally, there was nothing I could do, but the sense of helpless anger remained with me for months afterwards. In talking with the doctors, I had my anger re-inforced by their obvious stalling of the facts and the vagueness of their responses to direct questions, especially about the two doctors who allegedly were in the movie-house.

Jerome Melquist, long-time friend and confident of Paul, put together a memorium to his memory, comprising 50 essays from those Van Wyke Brooks referred to as *"...the 50 most important living American writers!"* I was asked to contribute a piece to the book, which I did, but I really wasn't feeling like "an important American writer". The book, while well-done and worthy of Paul's memory, was not what might be termed a commercial success, but, as Eleanor Anderson later said to me (Sherwood's widow): *"If the book had been a commercial success, I feel it would have cheapened Paul's contributions and diminished his stature."*

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In times like these, when there is so little joy in freedom, it is odd that the death of a single free-spirit should produce such a hugh hole in the fabric of the aesthetic experience in America; a hugh hole with ragged edges and an infinite melancholy.

Heavy and predictable clichés have rolled forth since the passing of Paul. It seems we have beggared the language with weary quotations uttered by rote for politician or genius. With our manipulated social values and earth-common standardisation, we've long since lost any ability to deliniate the chaff from the wheat.

In losing Paul we have lost a grand human being. Rare still, we have lost an amazingly honest and very real artist. When Paul passed, there was a gentle gasp, a sudden, compressive interior mourning; and those of us who had known him went about avoiding each other's eyes, for fear of of seeing a reflexion of our own exile.

I do not feel that Paul grew weary of waiting for the tardy raven, as John Davidson did; nor do I feel that the weight of his self-appointed mission crushed him. Despite our loud boasts of frontier virtue and rugged individualism, we scorn the truly creative being, the free-spirit here in America. When a select man does appear among us, we

band together to destroy him, resentful of the harrowing sense of self-insufficiency his mere presence conjures. In bovine arrogance, we insist his superiority is only a point of view...but if it is genuine, we will praise himwhen he is dead!

It is a contemptible attitude we bear for the select man. In truth, we do not deserve such men as Paul. Posthumous genius? - we have more posthumous geniuses per square mile than any other country. Because of our standardised perceptivity, our truly creative spirits live far to the north of everyday experience, a Valhalla, if you will, as vaguely perceived and so dimly comprehended by everyman as to rival the ten thousand religious sects warring on their private ten thousand highroads to Hell.

But we are baffled...we who knew the deep humanity of Paul, and are a little lost and more than a little sad. That a boot-black can go from the Lower East Side to the presidency of a fabulous motion-picture company (and barely speak the language) may well be one of the inherent perils of a democracy. That men like Paul, whose slightest talent enriches our world and uplifts the human experience, should pass and the world and his wife blunder on unconcernedly must be a crime.

Must we always mouth platitudes and toss chrome-plated halos wrapt in cellophane by DuPont to our authentic creative spirits so dishonestly? - so insincerely? - those spirits that will know no more days after tommorow?

With the passing of Paul we have been bereft of more than just a distinctive man of letters. Those of us who arise each dawn to once more do battle with the philistine vagaries of everyman have lost a great friend.

Paul's gifts were his ability to write with a contageous appreciation of the aesthetic experience in America at all levels, the gift of creating life-long friendships, and, as Edmund "Bunny" Wilson was to observe, to give himself away to the artists of his period. Loving life and ever cognizant of the truly new, the original, the unregimented in the *Zeitgeist*, his passion endured up to the time of his death. He continued to be interested in all aspects of the American aesthetic experience - new talent, new music, painting, literature, friends.

He disapproved violently, for such a mild little man, of the crass commercialism which was already battering its way into our aesthetic experience on a national scale, especially when it was always the non-creative people who seemed to benefit most. I remember, for example, how pleased he was with the revival of interest in Henry James - a revival that owed much to his own compelling influence; and one remembers his bitter distaste over the media praise of a much publicised female

writer. He once protested to me:

"No ear! - no music! She can't conceive a story or a character without revealing her shallowness. Nor can she write!"

Deeply read in the Continental languages, he was not a literary person at all. He disliked people who paraded their book-learning. He did like people who were very clever with their hands, and in this he was one with Sherwood Anderson. With the blind intensity of a boy, he disliked pedants and pretenders; of them he spoke and wrote sharply and explosively. In his rooms every wall was covered from floor to ceiling with shelves of books, in a variety of languages, and each shelf sagged under the weight. And, like all men who love books, he could go immediately to a given title amid the hundreds of titles there.

On the surface, Paul's life was placid and some would say, monotonous. He was a regular worker, though he never forced his talents to meet a deadline or a space requirement. But the excitement and enthusiasm of his inner life is evident in novel, critical study, essay, marginal reflexion, or anthology. It was also evident in conversation with the man, in his affection for his friends, his love of humanity, his humble feeling for hills and rivers and the dirty street of the Village.

He was a deeply religious man, though not in the orthodox sense of the word. His was the basic religious feeling that viewed life as the final mystery, the ultimate reality, and he was in love with every form in which he encountered it. Once, after generously reading the manuscript of my first novel, he said:

"Santayana once said to me that every truly creative person should be offered an umbrella-stand in a museum, a corner in reality from which creativity can be protected from the world. Somewhere, you have a corner in reality that comes through in your writings. You must not give up your 'umbrella-stand' just to become a commercial success!"

Paul is not yet dead; we who knew him will remember and his death will remain forever incomplete, unfinished. With a rare sense of beauty in an unbeautiful age, our memory of the man and his work will endure.

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BOOKS BY PAUL ROSENFELD

Port of New York: a collexion of essays.
Musical Chronicles; musical criticism.
Musical Portraits: miniature biographies.
An Hour With American Music: modern music.
Men Seen: literary & musical people.
By Way Of Art: a defense of Art.
America & Alfred Stieglitz.
The Boy In the Sun: a novel.
Discoveries of a Music Critic: essays.
American Caravan: literary miscellania.

CO-FOUNDER or CONTRIBUTOR or EDITOR:

Commonweal; Seven Arts Magazine; The Dial; New Republic; New York Press; Kenyon Review; Tomorrow; The Nation.

* * *

Paul Rosenfeld was born in New York City in 1890. He attended the Riverview Public School, the Riverview Military Academy (where he first came to love music), attended Yale, and took a degree in Journalism from Columbia. He served with the U.S.Army during The First War, without ever seeing combat. For the next 30 years he championed, and frequently single-handedly, every fresh talent in American literature, painting, music, befriending countless writers, poets, musicians, and doing such generous things as underwriting Sherwood Anderson's first trip to Paris, David Diamond's studies in Cuba, paying E.E.Cumming's rent, and berating publishers until Kenneth Patchen's poetry got into print.

Paul Rosenfeld died on the sidewalk of Sixth Avenue in Greenwich Village on the 22nd of August, 1946, from a heart attack.

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NOTE: The reproduction of the portraits of Paul are from photographs taken by Alfred Stieglitz at An American Place over the years.

PAUL PASSES

(PAUL ROSENFELD)

The Word lay dying 'neath its ancient masque when first his rimless soul discovered it.

Inquiringly, he drummed interior monologues upon the pole-cold masque, and having come devoid of fear, it was a sight made lovely to behold.

A tiny crack upon the masque, another, yet another: a thousand little webby cracks that spread and feathered out: against the bloody river lights his face blazed up inspired: bruised a bit and bleeding, joy was in his eyes.

The masque dissolved - up sprang the Ancient Word... to find within far cruder dreams that death is ever doubt.

But there was glee and gladness for a little while.

In times like these, when there is so little joy in freedom, we still find faith in sweet remembrance of a little man who cast an enormous shadow .....

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STREET-SCENES

The lean lights toss their tattered beams
Across each passerby and burn
Like a ragged obligato
To the weary town's nocturne;
Metallic laughter - sounds of sorrow,
Gay painted faces fogged afar,
And lightly pinned on the maudlin sky
A single trembling star.

People in rubies and people in rags
And people with soul-sick eyes,
Wandering 'round with strange set smiles,
The masque of an ancient disguise;
Tragedy starved for want of a word,
Grotesque despairing in a back-room,
Alleys alive with the reeling song
Of solitary doom.

Dim shadows whispering endlessly,
Red neon signs that hiss and flame,
White satin slips and velvet bruise
The twisted streets in a twisted game;
The nameless nothings slink from sight,
Bitterly blasted, any old lawn,
With dull hearts grown too tired to hate
The unrelenting dawn.

A city reaping sorrow - of pleasures come too late,
Night and noises, sleep and silence,
And the dirty Village streets,
Dirty streets.....

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The SHOCK of RECOGNITION

SHERWOOD ANDERSON: *"You have something to say - everyone says so. Paul is enthusiastic about your writings!"*

PAUL ROSENFELD: *"You have a corner in reality. You must never allow yourself to be lured out of it."*

HENRY MILLER: *"God bless Ireland! You are too much the intellectual and you write too damned well!"*

GALE WILHELM: *"I, too, am after the same small point on a distant horizon. Thank you for letting me know there are others on the same strange pilgrimage."*

MERTON S. YEWDALE: *"You seem to have an amazing grasp of time and place, particularly of the aesthetic experience."*

JOSEPH KLING: *"You are a writer with a conscience - I detect a kinship!"*

ANAÏS NIN: *"The intensity with which you feel life comes through in almost everything you write, and sometimes I find it painful - I share your pain."*

IAN HUGO: *"You are an important writer. We have needed someone like you for a long time."*

EDMUND "BUNNY" WILSON: *"I have no hesitation in placing you among the 50 most important American writers."*

BROOKS ATKINSON: *"You have an amazingly acute insight into the contemporary American literary scene, rather rare for a transplanted Irishman, if I may say so. I shall look forward to reviewing your future writings."*

NANCY PARKER: *"Boy! - you can WRITE! Your characterisations are wonderful and your sense of the tragic is beautiful! You have a message America needs."*

e.e.cummings: *"I saw a mighty man upon the stairs - the man was holding the Word - the man was you."*

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KASHMIRI SONG

Hindu Love & Laurence Hope

Laurence Hope
From a photograph by E.O. Beresford, London

Once upon a time, when I was a little lad, probably at the age of ten and two, I sat on the quays of my native Galway and dreamed of a land ten thousand miles away. That day was much like any other day, and yet, it was not the same, for on that day I beheld the world new made and beautiful and filled with a savage wonder, the sort of savage wonder that only a caulic Kelt could know whose age was ten and two.

On that day the Christian Brother's school did not know me, and quite soundly were my fingers cracked, but what of that? If on that day the lure of the Lays of Ossian and the deeds of Finn Machaoul or Conn of the Hundred Battles was not strong on me, I felt I paid their memories no disrespect if now there throbbed through my brain the strange sad imagery of The Teak Forest, Afridi Love, Kashmiri Love Song...

Though love of our ancient language was still strong on me, something inside me was struggling to respond, to articulate, to respond to the tragically beautiful imagery conjured up by an unknown woman's unique reaction to an alien life.

That was the day when first I read, and was forever to be enchanted by, the poetical works of "Laurence Hope".

In times like these, when freedom is at risk, it might be well to recall occasionally the high courage we had as children with a dream. Too often nowadays do we encounter children who are starving...for want of a dream. And perhaps it is remembrance of a lad dreaming on a quay in Galway from which I have drawn the courage to write of Laurence Hope.

In unrolling the fragile scroll of esoteric literary history one pauses now and again upon those rare souls whose deaths are noted as an eternally unfinished entry. And it is true that in no matter what future generation a nascent writer happens upon that distended entry, a sense of the dead writer's life comes through to him as such a fecundative force that the word *death* becomes totally without meaning. Something like this happened when I first read Laurence Hope.

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It has been nearly 50 years since the sudden, bizarre death of Laurence Hope impoverished the literary world, and in all of the ensuing decades, less than 5,000 words of a passing biographical or critical reference have appeared in print. This is more than passing strange when we consider that hardly a week passes without some singer or orchestra offering the immortal *Kashmiri Love Song*. Also, year after year, her collected poems continue to sell briskly and dependably, in ornate boards and fancy slip-cases, and remain popular as gifts.

Aside from three verses by Kipling, one is hard prest to name

any other poet whose works have been set to music and whose collected works continue to be in demand year after year, done up as esoteric gift packages for the Holiday trade, and stocked without hesitation by book-sellers everywhere.

The point I would labour, all other considerations aside for the moment, is that literally thousands of people down through the years, have bought, read,discussed, given and received the works of Laurence Hope - yet the woman, herself, remains shockingly unknown. The strange and splendid appeal of her lyric poetry, the gorgeous verse and haunting beauty, their lyrical pain and disturbing melancholy have moved many a casual reader to wonder and quiet dismay. And once encountered, their appeal and their effect is positive and enduring.

It is well-known that the dubious creators of popular songs here have not hesitated to plunder and mutilate great music from the past. In 1952 a popular song, entitled There Is No Flame To Cool The Flame of Love, was recorded by Jeri Southern, among others, and the title was taken directly from a poem by Laurence Hope of the same title, and the so-called verses of the song were more than a little suggestive of the poem. No credit was given, naturally.

The record album entitled Four Indian Love Lyrics remains available in shops across the country, and singers such as Nelson Eddy and John MacCormick have recorded the songs. One of the songs is, of course, the famous *Kashmiri Love Song*. In view of all this, it is not only surprising that no legitimate biography of Laurence Hope has been forth-coming, but doubly surprising when her only son said to me that his mother had impressed everyone with *how little she had put in the shop-window of Life!!*

I hold that the poetry and the woman of which I write to be something terribly unique. They say great events have humble origins. When Mohammet crept out of Mecca towards Medina, fearful for his life and by no means secure in his newly founded faith, he was attended by a following of one - Abu Bekr. In less than 80 years after his death, the Crescent of Islam was floating over Arabia, Syria, Turkistan, Egypt, Sind, Northern Africa, part of Spain - and was already brooding upon teeming millions who lived along the Indus. Perhaps this humble beginning reference to Laurence Hope will move another, better qualified, perhaps, to write a definitive biography, as a lure and a challenge for poets yet unborn.

The late Paul Rosenfeld, himself an eminent critic, once referred to literary critics as "creative orphans". The professional biographer, on the other hand, is a chap who merchandises the same sort of package year after year, changing only the wrappers. They make of the life they are detailing a chaste and epicene ballet, as a recent life of Olive Schriener, for example; they may even talk glibly to Poe as the original symbolist, flute easily of Shakespeare, and be truly catholic in assaying the Brontes. They are writers who suggest that Arnold was profound,

Moore was salacious, Disraeli's novels foreran the Jewish revolution of 50 years ago that saw the *shofar* traded for the saxophone. They were, as so wittily remarked, the lads who criticize, make love, beget, and yet, it is all lies.

The serious biographer, on the other hand, is an entirely different breed, although here again we are forced to accept the highly personal selectivity of the writer's sensitivity and the limits of his talents. Hence, in the main, their portraits are usually painted from the ante-chambers of history or art or politics, and the mere passage of time has really done their work for them. To do an acceptable biography of Mustafa Kamal, for example, would be shockingly easy, especially if one knew the Turkish language. The only task confronting the writer would be one of organisation, a statistical compilation, really.

There is another, rarer kind of biography which, for lack of a better designation, we may term the informal literary biography, written about a person in terms of that person's time and place and talent, with an acute awareness of the psychological implications of all three considerations. A good example would be that odd volume by Peterson entitled *Melody of Chaos*. This was a true literary biography of Conrad Aiken's *poetry*, and through it the poet emerged in three dimensions. There was also Phillips' book on Hart Crane, about 1931, with a preface by Aiken, in which Crane's work emerged bigger than the man.

This, then, is not a piece of neat and orderly compilation of faithful facts about a dead woman's life and art; rather, it is a venture into high aesthetic pleasure, historical enlightment, and the acquaintance of a singular poet.

* * *

It was when *chigons* and pork-pie hats were fashionable and the Empress Eugenie was sporting brown *foulard des Indes* trimmed with black velvet; when *Punch* was evoking sly chuckles at the new ankle-boots fleetingly glimpsed beneath milady's *cage americain* skirts; when men self-consciously stroked their new Dundreary beards and moved restlessly in their sack coats, that in Stoke House in Gloustershire, on the 9th of April, 1865, Adela Florence Cory was born.

Her father was Arthur Cory, then a Captain in the Indian Army, and her mother was Fanny Elizabeth Griffin. Adela followed an older sister, who later distinguished herself on the *Scinde Gazette*, and preceded a younger sister who was to later secure a solid reputation as a novelist and playwrite under the name "Victoria Cross".

Shortly after Adela was born, Capt. Cory returned to India, serving with distinction, as was fashionable in those days, and eventually retiring with the rank of Colonel. Meanwhile, Adela was educated at a

private school in Richmond in Surry. Upon leaving school, she went out to India to join her family, and apparently promptly fell in love with all that she saw and felt, read and smelled, and did. She married Colonel Malcolm H. Nicolson of H.M. Bengal Army in 1889, at the age of 24. They settled in Madras. While she made many trips back to England, she was constantly longing to return to India, by her own admission.

She carried her subtle fires and strange compulsions beneath the mask of the conventional Anglo-Indian society, and tales were gossiped of her romantic devotion to her husband. He called her "Violet", and that name is so inscribed in a very early snapshot of her, appended herein. Her only son, born shortly before her shocking death, was raised by his god-mother and Adela's aunt, Flora Annie Steele - who was editor of the *Scinde Gazette,* and a popular novelist of the kind that would be called "feminist" in the parlance of today. The son became a member of the Board of Barclay's Bank, and retired to a chalet in Switzerland - and was adamantly opposed to anyone writing a biography of his mother.

There is no record of when Laurence Hope first began to weave the barbaric tapestry of her love of India, but her attraction to the "Jewel In the Crown of Victoria" was early on noted by the English colony in which she resided. She was once referred to as *"strange and wayward - not at all like the rest of us!"*

So, while her lay-sisters were avidly devouring and industriously reweaving the latest scandal, criticising, begetting, making of colonial life in India a tissue-tarp of lies, Laurence Hope was wandering amid the ruins of ancient temples, delving into Moslem, Hindu, Persian lore, utilising upon occasion her husband's fantastic grasp of the many dislects spoken in India, seeking and finding another face of beauty.

She did not contribute to the dubious gaiety of lawn-parties at Simla, Calcutta, Madras; her croquett game was amateurish; riding side-saddle did not appeal to her, and packing off into the bush with kerosine tins, enormous zinc-plated baths, enamelled pots, rugs, chairs, tiffen baskets, *ad infinitum,* openly bored her. Her contemporaries retaliated by saying she was moody and strange, a spectator rather than a participant of life. They were never to realise that she preferred to absorb the land, rather than pick it apart, and that her subsequent work was an unanswerable blow for all the things her own people, especially the women, denied and ignored.

The Frenchman Taine, had he chanced to wander through British India at the time he was writing of contemporary Englishmen and their society, undoubtedly would have used more incisive language - or probably he would have written nothing at all. But what he did write, because it is of the proper time and place, adds another facet to the wormy rose of Victorianism that passed as a bouquet in the time of Laurence Hope:

"In England we discover men of reflexion who do not need bold or

striking ideas, but palpable and profitable truths. They desire to be furnished with useful provision of authentic examples on man and his existence, and demand nothing more. No matter if the idea is vulgar, meat and bread are vulgar, too...They wish to be taught the kinds and degree of happiness and unhappiness, the varieties and results of character and condition, the advantages and inconveniences of town and country, wealth and moderate circumstance, knowledge and ignorance, because they are moralists and utilitarians - because they look in a book for knowledge that will turn them from folly, and motives to confirm then in uprighteousness - because they cultivate in themselves sense, that is common, practical reason. A little fiction, a few portraits, the least amount of amusement will suffice to adorn it...It is because Johnson, for example, was dull and stupid that he suits the English taste."

Such was the age into which Laurence Hope was born, with her great talent and ultimate torment.

As one of the Post-Sepoy Mutiny, she went to India, fresh from the dehydrating atmosphere of the private school in Richmond - with its trim and orderly hedge-rows, its sculptured box-wood, its geometrically planted trees - to step ashore in a land of palms and temples. If she came too late to be intimately familiar with the days of Bishop Heber, the painter Deniell, Southby's epic and Goethe's epigram about *Sakuntala*, there was still excitement and allure in anyone's first exposure to high tiared temples of the last of the Dravidians, the stone pools framed by stairs and motionless lizards, the strange cloisters and sudden hills arising on far-flung horizons. There was mystery and magic in the saltless rivers standing at ebb-tide six months of the year, Deccan cattle with their long horns reminding one of Hogarth's line-of-rhythm, lop-eared sheep and bare brown limbs..."*dark eyes adream with unfamiliar creeds and calm with remote philosophies.*"

Laurence Hope found poetry still current coin among the Indians while her own people were evincing pseudo-excitement over the recent rediscovery of classical Hindu literature, which they were prone to exaggerate in terms of its antiquity. She found in the fabulous flux and flow of the life about her the conditions and priviliges of genius, and her own sad talents were to create and preserve the strangeness and the beauty of the experience. The cry for some perfectly beautiful thing - a wistful and a savage weeping after...has not the most casual reader of her works not heard it sighing through her pages in the long lean stretches of the night when time stands still and life bulks large as an inverted question mark? Has not the aesthetic network of the reader not jammed on the deep interior search, the pain of the eternal failure to make static even a moment's irenicism?

And does not each poem in itself sing that THIS was flame in her life's lamp, in her art's acheivement, and which, with bitter irony, must also burn out the artist's life? A casual window-shopper through life?

- indeed!! In effect, we are asked to believe that once and on a time did tarry briefly a talented lady on a shy and furtive stroll through life and India, who conjured three volumes of unique beauty, and then went casually on her way, the road never rising with her...

* * *

The Garden of Kama (India's Love Lyrics) was her first volume of poetry and her first use of the pseudonym "Laurence Hope", the derivation of which is unknown. Heinemann of London was her publisher, while the old John Lane company brought out companion American editions. Her second volume was published in 1903, *Stars of the Desert*; while her final volume was published posthumously in 1905 - known as *Indian Love* in England and as *Last Poems* in America.

The following verses have been taken from *Stars of the Desert*, the whole having been entitled *Hamili, the Sultan of Song:*

"Alas, for the fate of Hamili,
The slender fanatical singer,
Whose fingers were skilled on the ginbre;
Who played the tears into men's eyes.
Who harped on men's hearts til they quivered
And swayed on the border of madness,
Vibrating and twisting in madness,
Hamili, the Singer of Sighs!

Cholera epidemics have swept India since time out of mind, and they still do. The epidemic of 1904 swept Madras, and one of its victims was Lt. Gen. Malcolm Nicolson, the husband of Laurence Hope, on the 7th of August..

Members of the Anglo-Indian colony at Madras had long commented on her "romantic devotion" to her husband. Just how deep ran the subterrainian course of her devotion was attested to on the 4th of October, less than two months later, when she committed suicide by taken an horrendous dose of corrosive mercuric chloride. The chemical was easy to come by, both throughout the Empire and in America, but it remains a most awful way to die.

Symptoms of the poisoning come on quickly with a metallic taste in the mouth, a burning pain in the gullet and epigestrium, followed by vomitting and purging. The regurgitation is at first bilious, but later becomes bloody. There is a profound collapse, rapid and feeble pulse with cold clammy skin and muscular weakness. Death occurs within a few hours of ingestion of the poison, and is always extremely painful.Until after the Kaiser's War this was the most easily obtained of all poisons and the most commonly used poison for suicidal purposes.

Needless to say, her mode of death created the greatest scandal among the Anglo-Indian colony, not only in Madras but throughout the Empire. Media were at pains to play down the details, preferring to simply report her death as the result of depression over her husband's death. American news-media were not so thoughtful, and on the 11th of January, 1905, her death was reported in New York City as follows:

"Violet Nicolson, whose pen-name was Laurence Hope, and who was the author of 'India's Love Lyrics' and 'Stars of the Desert', died by her own hand in Madras as a result of her intense grief over the death of her husband, Lieut.-Gen. Malcolm Nicolson, who died last year of cholera in August."

Because of the pervasive social *morés* and tribal *tabus* of Victorianism, the death of Laurence Hope was whispered about but never openly discussed. And because of the prevalent moral stigma that was attached to suicide, even the literary media gave her passing scant attention. In fact, it was several years before her publishers would re-issue her slender and lovely little volumes, and even then they attempted to surround the works with press-agentry aura of Indian mysteriousness and the exoticism of far away places, not the merits of the works, themselves, or the woman who had created them. And then Frank Dodd, of Dodd-Mead & Company, in Indianapolis, conceived of the notion to package the works in colourful Oriental designs and offer them as something special to what in trade-circles is referred to as the Christmas trade. The notion proved quite successful, and since 1921 these fanciful packages have been offered in every department shop across the country. This has not obtained in England, oddly enough, where the works of Laurence Hope are barely remembered. I have come by the intelligence, however, that the public libraries in Madras have collexions of all of her poetry...but they are rarely withdrawn by the local populace.

A FEW APHORISMS FROM THE POEMS OF LAURENCE HOPE:

Race is the only immortality we know.

Of things once loved, though his heart be broken, the lover has never the right to judge.

To women love is a sacred rite; to men, it is custom or desire.

My faithlessness is but fidelity since I am never faithful but to you!

Women reck little of crime if the criminal be young and fair.

Malaria has two gifts for man - delirium and death.

Half-love is a treason that no lover can forgive.

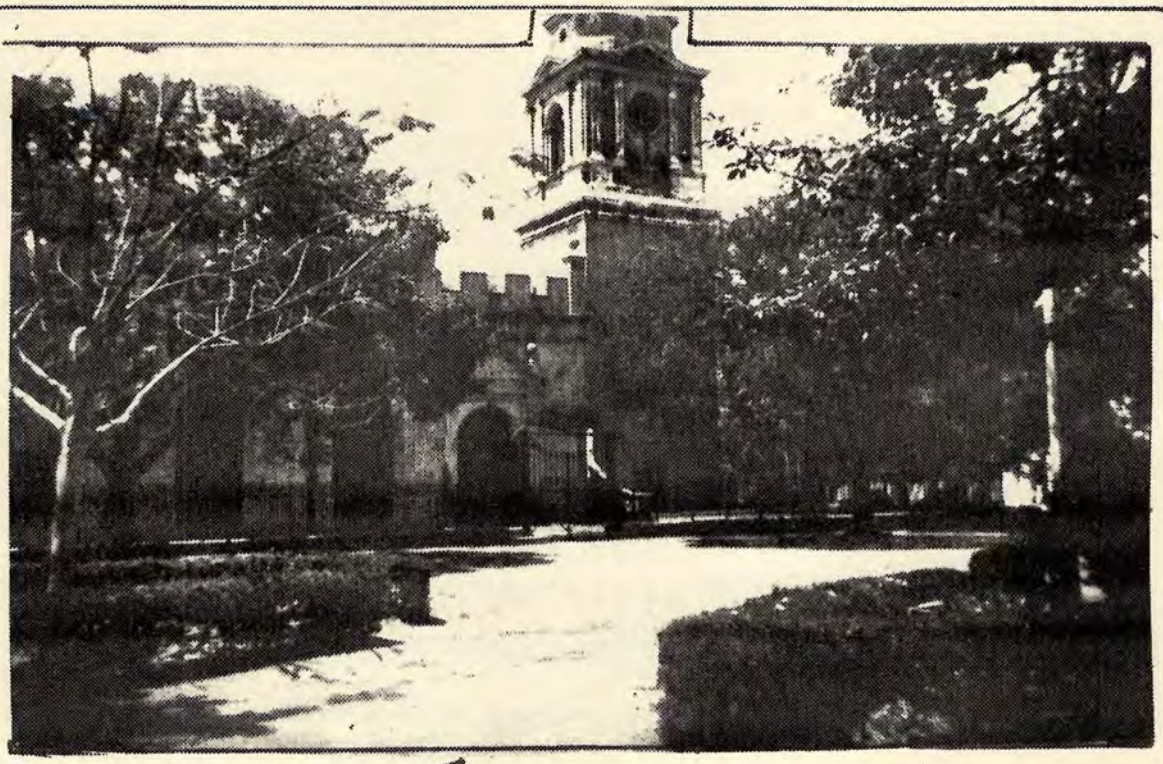
If one cannot live and remember, one should love and forget.

In the Chaos of Things, life is somewhat a sorrowful jest.

Happiness is but glimpsed as the faint mirage of a passing dream.

Youth is ever a careless thing and life is ever a slave of time.

For this is wisdom: to love, to live, to take what the gods may give, speed passion's ebb as you greet its flow, to have, to hold, and in time - let go!



MACKAY's GARDENS, once adjacent to the entrance to Ft. St. George Cemetary; 1953.

ENTRANCE to Ft. St. George Cemetary as it looks today. Note the begger under the lean-to in the lower right-hand corner.

THE GRAVE OF LAURENCE HOPE

These fuzzy snapshots were taken with a folding Kodak in 1953, as part of my investigation of the life of Laurence Hope. At that time, I knew nothing of Photography and had no interest in it. I mention this as a regret, for the current condition of the grave is appalling, as the following pages will show.

The entrance to the cemetary was fronted by Mackay's Garden, also long since neglected and partially destroyed in the name of progress. I include a couple of snapshots of the entrance, as it was, and as it is today. The contemporary snapshots were taken by Robin Miller, a self-proclaimed photographer living in Madras. In the days of the Raj, Mackay's Gardens were at one end of the usual Sunday stroll or carriage ride down the very wide boulevard. The boulevard has also vanished.

The decay of Ft. St. James Cemetary is symptomatic of the decay abroad throughout Tamil Nadu today, and it's rather sad...

FT. ST. JAMES CEMETARY, TAMIL NADU, MADRAS, INDIA

These snapshots are of the grave of Laurence Hope and her husband taken 80 years after her suicide. The state of the grave-site is shocking, and the current rector was very upset when, after his insistence that people who took their own life could not be buried in consecrated ground, the grave was located from records in my possession, and it was discovered that Laurence Hope, had indeed, been buried in such ground. (The rector was rather young and new to the job.)

The state of the grave-site should not be that shocking, I suppose, considering that even the Indian Times refers to modern Madras as "City of Neglect", and deplores the growing vandalism of graves in the many cemetaries scattered around Madras - and all in the same state of disrepair as is suggested by the snapshots shown here.

When I suggested to the rector that I would be willing to pay an annual stipend to have the grave of Laurence Hope properly attended, I was told that Indians wouldn't work in an area where they could be painfully stung by over-grown wasps.....

Am Weg

There is a grave no man can find - an autumnal place where lies buried all the dreams of squandered youth, of innocence and ignorance, and all the wonder of the world.

* * *

I have walked through this life as Goethe walked - like a banner on parade. And along the way I have met and mingled with many a man and many a woman whose names and works have thrown a glowing shadow slantwise across the perceptive world.

Practitioners of all the plastic arts they were - writers and poets, painters, musicians, sculptures, musicians; along with members of the *demi-monde,* such as actresses, actors, night-club singers, motion-picture "stars" in that fetid deerpark we call Hollywood.

* * *

As with any parade, there will always be a myriad of spectators lining the route. One knows they are there but one really doesn't "see" them. They are like the private adjunctive abstractions of one's private peregrinations towards some unknown Bourne. And yet, could it not be that it is their great faceless commonality that throws the select individuals one occasionally encounters along the way, into such sharp and arresting relief?

It was the fashion among the gifted and talented of my generation to go to Paris and "starve for art", just as it was later to be fashionable to live like a peasant in Greenwich Village - still in the name of "Art" - complete with cold-water flats, fat rats and swollen cock-roaches, no furniture, and with the only requirement being a pallet or mattress on the floor for the nightly ritual of casual fornication.

I understand that the young and gauche still go to Paris for the sake of Art, but unlike my generation, they descend upon that grossly over-rated town in groups, never alone, and being amply supplied with plastic money. It is not even necessary to talk with any of this new-breed "artist" to realise that none of them would ever "starve for art" as their individual protest against the ugliness of the corporate society and man's unhumanity to man, the better to produce, hopefully, images of art that give everyman solace.

* * *

BIRD OF PASSAGE

Albion Moonlight vs. Kenneth Patchen

The current glorification of the gutter, trashy novels, the cult of the ugly is patently a negation of life. The question may well be whether or not modern life is worth saving. The old Biblical question of being one's brother's keeper remained unanswered.

There was the evening in the Village, long ago and gone, when I was walking the dirty, intorted streets with my friend and literary mentor, Paul Rosenfeld. It was raining, a light and greasy rain that always seemed peculiar to the Village, and not the rest of Manhattan. We had walked along in silence, at ease with our silence and each other.

At the corner of Christopher Street and Sheridan Square we paused at the entrance to the Seventh Avenue subway. We simply paused there, saying nothing, idly watching the slanting rain in the head-lamps of passing automobiles, mostly taxi-cabs.

A man came out of the maw of the subway entrance, hulking large and obscure in the always dim light. He was bare-headed, with close-cropt hair; his jacket mismatched his trousers and his head was bent. We watched him turn into Sheridan Square, pause, glance back at us, then turned and came towards us.

Paul grunted a sound of recogniton and excused himself. He met the man and under Paul's monstrous black umbrella they held earnest discourse. After awhile I saw Paul reach into his pocket and give the man something, which I knew to be money. The man moved rapidly away and we stood in silence awhile longer, finally turning towards Sixth Avenue and the Waldorf cafeteria, which was open all night. I had recognized the man as Kenneth Patchen. His slender, rather esoteric volume of blank verse, *The Journal of Albion Moonlight*, had just been published. It was being talked about in excited clichés and platitudes in every coffee-shop in the Village, but everyone knew that Patchen had not received an advance-royalty, and no-one expected the book to sell well.

The gesture Paul had made was typical of the man, and it would have been bad form to comment on it to him. As we placed our baked apples and coffee on a table, Paul shook his umbrella suddenly and said:

"To what extent am I my brother's keeper? I have tried to

to find the answer to that question all of my life. Give me the answer to that question and I can become God!"

The words were flat, incisive, and coloured by cerebral passion. And suddenly I felt depressed and lonely, an urbacitic loneliness that transcended momentarily the questing loneliness of the creative life. The thought that was suffocating me was this: If Paul Rosenfeld, with his many gifts and perceptions and compassion, his amazing sensibilities to the whole of the American aesthetic experience, whose rôle was legend in encouraging and pushing forward and frequently supporting such select men as Sherwood Anderson, e.e.cummings, Waldo Frank, John Marin, David Diamond, Max Graf, Aaron Copeland, Stark Young, *et al., ad in.* - not to mention the still seeking D.H.Moore - if this man, so much more talented and knowledgeable and sensitive than I, could pose such a question after the rich and fecund and *good* life he had led, what possible chance was there for a transplanted Irishman to acheive any sort of significant insight into the American aesthetic experience?

Naturally, I did not respond to his question, as there could be no response. When we parted, he suggested that I accompany him on the following Thursday to a poetry reading.

The following Thursday evening we went to a basement flat on Eighth Street, that turned out to be the abode of Kenneth Patchen. The flat comprised one large room, with the typical wooden floor, bare, and a Pullman bed and hide-away kitchenette. About eight or nine people were already there, sitting cross-legged in a semi-circle on the bare wooden floor, and in the center stood Patchen, reciting his poetry. I ensconced myself in a corner and listened, as I had read *Albion Moonlight*, and had been impressed by its uneveness, and its frequently striking and original imagery, even though I did not care for blank verse. I had read it at the suggestion of Paul, and did not regret it.

There were the usual exclaimations of synthetic delight, the anticipated clichés of appreciation or ecclesiastical splitting of hairs over meanings and the juxtaposition of certain words or phrases, and on and on. Typical. When coffee was served, Patchen's wife came out for the first time. She looked Greek, round faced, a fairly trim figure, and seemed to push before her an intense aura of repressed nervousness. She smiled fixedly, uttering a word here and there, then went to stand in the middle of the circle of squatting admirers with Patchen, who said:

"Behold the truth! We have been married for eight years and we have yet to consumate our marriage. In this way we have kept inviolate that white round ball of purity that is true love!"

I stared in disbelief, glanced at Paul, then got up and slowly left the flat, never again to attend Patchen's Thursday night circles.

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STIEGLITZ: Genius or Spoiled-Child?

AN AMERICAN PHENOMENON

One of the peculiarities of the American psyche that most foreigners notice immediately is that American seem to enjoy being insulted anent their alleged provencialism, social crudity, and lack of traditional cultural norms. But there is a distinction made by the native American - he must only be insulted by Europeans!

Since Dickens and Trollope in the last century demonstrated that American were eager to pour out hard cash to foreign carriers of culture just to be insulted by them, there has been a steady stream of such culture-vultures from Europe - writers, lecturers, journalists, musicians. The tradition, if we may call it that, still flourishes, as witness the mythology that has been carefully cultivated around a German-American in our midst named Alfred Stieglitz.

I was recently given a new book by Paul Rosenfeld, my literary mentor, entitled *America & Alfred Stieglitz*. In consequence of seeing Paul's name among the list of contributors, I naturally anticipated a reaffirmation of my respect for his literary abilities. But then I read this collexion of minor mischiefs - and was quietly stunned.

Having been to 291 Fifth Avenue many times with Paul, and having talked with - or, rather, having listened to the meandering distribes from Stieglitz on Life and Art - always in capital letters - and having also listened to O'Keefe and Marin and Steichen, and many a limp-wristed 'other' who were always underfoot, I had always come away quite unimpressed and with a feeling of having wasted my time. I had tried on several occasions to explain to Paul that I simply didn't seem able to penetrate the dense, cotton-candy amorphousness that suffocated "291". Paul had simply smiled and said that someday I would comprehend. His new book, I felt, was that someday, but it wasn't.

There was an intellectually muddy atmosphere perpetually surrounding the mystique - not of Photography, but of Alfred Stieglitz.

Stieglitz tumbled into this life (as he later tumbled into Art) head-first on New Year's Day of 1864. The date may have had a certain ironical significance, as that year marked the end of the War Between the States, on the one hand; and what there had been of American culture,

rooted in New Eangland tabus and Southern *morés*, was being rendered rootless and diffuse.

Fundamentally, Stieglitz is a New Yorker who hasn't the faintest notion of what the rest of the country looks like, smells like, aspires to, abides by. To him, Paris is the only place to live in Europe, except Prussian Germany, where his parents, good Germans both, had sent him when he was 17 to study engineering. This was the era when The Great God Machine was devouring converts all over Europe and England, and to be an engineer was to be a man of social distinction.

But Stieglitz dropt engineering in favour of the new art known as Photography, at that time an infant discipline. Question: did this prove that there remains in him some strain of Jewish exclusiveness, or the peculiarly intense and brittle aestheticism that is not infrequent among cultivated Jews? Having taken up Photography, he plunged into it with all the complete obstinancy of his now characteristic fanaticism and dogmaticism.

To give the Devil his due, it must be admitted that from about 1886 to 1902 Stieglitz was the most active, experimental, innovative amateur photographer in the world. Full marks to him. Whatever one may think of his pretensions to being more than this today, it would be ungracious to deny him that title. His contributions to Photography were real and authentic. His self-proclaimed role of art-critic, art-dealer, art-defender, art-publicist, freak or tedious bore remains phoney, contrived, dubious!

Had he stuck with Photography one could easily pay him full and sincere homage; but like the neurotic compulsiveness of another art fanatic - Gertrude Stein - Stieglitz is touted in subject book - by 25 allegedly intelligent and perceptive people - as a philosopher, teacher, discoverer of pure genius, an inspiration for the Machine Age, a brand-new Messiah...

In truth, he is none of these things - simply an obstinate and opinionated old man who has had the misfortune of having lived beyond his hour of glory. He was a photographer of great merit, no more, no less; he remains a remembered image of a photographer, no more, no less, as his recent uninspired photographs of O'Keefe ascending a stair-case in the nude testify. She has been his wife since 1924, yet they are rarely together, she preferring the emptiness of the Southwest. I also understand that she was rather distressed when Stieglitz hung those photographs alongside the stairs at 291, so that anyone ascending the stairs would encounter them at every step.

Freud erred grossly with his fanatical insistence that sex was man's strongest drive. It isn't. Man's strongest drive is personal VANITY. And it had to be the demon of vanity that caused Stieglitz to

renounce the established photographic societies and journals, despite his having eagerly accepted honours and awards and medals from such for several years before, to set-up what he has called Photo-Sessionists at 291 Fifth Avenue in 1902. His simplistic premise was *Photography Is ART!* That premise has yet to be proved, and in Volume I of my *Photographic Notebooks* I believe I have established that it can never be proved.

His mindless excursion into the world of Art was prompted more through the mystical murlings of his friend, the lesbian Gertrude Stein, and the artistic tastes of Steichen. That his art-judgements were suspect from the very beginning should have been obvious to anyone after his touting of the sculptures of Rodin - a man whose work represents an ideal of sculpture which no honest sculpture has not come to reject with contempt. But despite Stieglitz's utterances against the "commercialism" of the world, it should be pointed out that when he set himself up as an art-connoisseur, his *commercial* rise was sensational.

He has chosen to forget the inconvenient fact, of which I had recently reminded him to his annoyance, that it is solely as a photographer that he has any right to think of himself in contact with the mainstream of Art, domestic or foreign.

The sensation-hunting energies of his friend Stein were prest into service to further the impression among Americans, chiefly New Yorkers and students of women's colleges, that he actually knew a good deal about Art. Actually, it was Steichen in Paris who first introduced him to the Impressionists and proclaimed "a new idea" in Art. Authentic American painters, such as Eakin, Homer, La Farge, the tragic Rider, had laboured in loneliness and love to express something distinctly American, and had failed becausethe European mystique still awed Americans. Stieglitz would have none of them.

"The Stieglitz Idea" drew a wide-eyed and eager group around him, much like the Thursday-night groupings that squat around Kenneth Patchen and his unloved wife, there in the Village. Happily, some of them have gone on to realise their own songs, not to hum echoes of another man's music. Allan Tate, and his lovely wife, Carolyn, flirted briefly with 291, but chucked it rather quickly as being of no aesthetical consequence early on. I can still remember Carolyn, with her large floppy hats and her perpetually charming Southern femininity, laughingly dismissing the crowd at 291 as "freaks".

What was The Stieglitz Idea? - simply this: *The artist should cultivate agreeable patterns of paint that mean nothing in particular, and which partake in all instances of a fragment of reality!*

Errant nonsense, of course, but, then, all men are not created equal. The larger-than-life blossom petals of O'Keefe, the meaningless lines in the inferior medium of water-colour by Marin, the jangling daubs

of Hartley, *et al.*, are all based upon The Stieglitz Idea - the deliberate omission of everything that is significant, the magnification of some trivial or unimportant detail, and, above all, be utterly uncommunicative! Maholy-Nagy can do no better with his courses in Abstract Structures at Chicago - which haven't advanced one jot since his expulsion from the Bauhaus cadre in the early Thirties.

I contend, along with others perhaps a bit more perceptive, that Alfred Stieglitz has probably ruined or thwarted more talent with his misdirection, his Prussian dogmatism, his dense and boring pronouncements. Whatever happened to the much-touted photographers-as-artists Stieglitz has "discovered" during the last two decades? Even Steichen has left the fold of this German guru, and has done quite well for himself, commercially. Apparently, one can abide the Wagnerian ego of Stieglitz just so long.

The fundamental fallacy of Stieglitz's insistence that somehow Photography Is Art lies on a simple and obvious fact - Art, of any derivation and in any medium, is an expression of *generalisation* and *synthesis!!*

Art has always aimed at stating the important facts of natural reality, or man's most important myths in such a form and arrangements as to give pleasure to the beholder or reader - *id quad visum placet*. It requires no great intellectual effort to recognize the patent fact that Photography is simply a recording technique of whatever aspect of the fixed reality happens to be before the camera at the moment of exposure. One cannot generalise or synthesize reality with an optical-mechanical device called a camera.

Artists and photographers sponsored by Stieglitz - and Paul Strand is a good example of the latter - have produced works as uniform and as predictable as the works of Gertrude Stein - images of a single, incomprehensible dimension, words of one syllable, without any connecting link of *sense!* Artistic decadence is the only phrase that can properly be applied to The Stieglitz Idea. Nor is his own latter-day photographic work devoid of this charge, as any casual perusal of his photographs at 291 quickly reveal. His current work is the record of the advent of never-ending monotony and boredom.

To say that he is a product of the New York Syndrome - that is, metropolitan charlatanry - is, perhaps, too glib a dismissal. It should never have been necessary to take him seriously, but the fact that 25 allegedly perceptive writers and poets and artists have conspired to produce this *apologia* entitled *America & Alfred Stieglitz* suggests that it is a public duty to refute such books and such men.

Goethe once observed that Art is *not* Life, but only knowledge *about* Life. Once, when Stieglitz was asked who he was, he replied:

"I am the moment. I am the moment with all of me and anyone is

free to be the moment with me. I do not know what the moment is....."

A rose is a rose is a rose...let there be neither theory nor standard of differentiation between Cherokee and Talisman, the snapshot is the moment, and Stein is equal to Michaelangelo...in a pig's eye.

Stieglitz's obstinate refusal to consider the values of one thing or discipline as opposed to another has blinded him totally to that group of American painters, for example, who have indeed dealt with America in American terms and American values. I think easily of Benton, Curry, Wood, Burchfield, and such. Their works show a distinctly American spirit, quite divorced from the conventional European values of Art. I would recommend Benton's scathing and brilliant repudiation of Stieglitz's arty protestations that first appeared in *The American Review* of 1934.

The vexing question: can Stieglitz's photographs be deemed Art?

The answer is simple to come by. The artist expresses his human skill through a given medium to project a view of reality that is communicable; thus he is at best a responsible workman, the artifex, a master of skills. In using a camera as a means of expression, one chooses a means and a method and a medium that *cannot be controlled!* - a means that is totally dependent on the accidental accuracy of the lens, conditions of light and shade, sensitivity of chemicals, emulsions and solutions. The recent technical improvements, not advances, in cameras has made absolutely no difference in the quality of "art" in the photographs produced.

Stieglitz has lived long enough to see some of his earlier works take on the aspect of documentary interest. But so is Paul Revere's etching of the Boston Masscre of documentary interest, but neither can be deemed Art. For the rest, his work represents a jumble of arty fads. It remains meaningless because it is unselective and totally divorced from the reality of everyman.

To claim, as some do, that his works are the quintessence of America can only be done if we are ready to admit that America is a place without any intellectual or aesthetical perceptions of any kind - *kultur und Zeitgeist*. Pretentious nonsense is not philosophy, neither is it Art nor Photography - just Stieglitz.

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When I wrote the preceding piece I was interested primarily in the aesthetic experience, per se, not Photography. Twenty years later I was asked to write a piece for International Photographic Digest on Stieglitz, which I did. I had, literally, forgotten the item you have just read, but there was apparently a residual memory, as when

I sat down to write the piece for IPD the same title suggested itself to me almost immediately, so I used it with no recollexion of having used it before. In the interim, I had taken a rather intense look into the history and practice of Photography. The following is a transcript of the IPD piece, and upon recently discovering my original writings on Stieglitz in an obsolete file, I was bemused by how consistent my critical appraisal of Stieglitz was, twenty years before.

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One rarely encounters non-emotional admirers of Stieglitz or detractors of Stieglitz. People who have never seen his early photographs (pre-Photo-Session) and who literally know nothing of his life, loves, or changling photographic principles, will immediately take sides at the mere mention of his name.

Of all American photographers, and that would include Ansel Adams, Stieglitz has had more books and articles and comments written about him than any other. And yet, not at any point in all this vast literature definitive, unbiased, critically objective in terms of Photography, *per se*. None has been capable of placing him in an historically proper perspective. This is incredible when you consider that any assessment of American Photography, regardless of how fragmentary or lacking in authority, must always take Stieglitz, the man, his work, and his mythic influence into account.

THE ENDURING MYSTIQUE:

A large seqment of American photographic folk-lore is always passed on in the shadow cast by the German-American we know as Alfred Stieglitz. And like all folk-heroes, his name has a higher recognition factor than actual remembrance and assessment of his "heroic" deeds.

He remains the most sacred cow in the pantheon of American Photography, around which all others of this century are grouped, in many otherwise mature minds. His concretised judgements on Photography and Art remain sacrosant for many, and this ecclesiastical aura has descended, by apostolic succession, even unto this generation.

OF MODERN FADISM:

The current psychopathetic neuroticism that manifests itself in a demented obsession just to be noticed, adolescent public exhibitions, and a so-called life-style that claims a spurious mode of self-expression has also infected the inconsequential fringe of American Photography. Editors, me-too photographers, media-managers, would-be photographic writers have all climbed on the modern band-wagon of illiterate and

meaningless denunciation of values and discipline without having anything of substance to offer in their place.

In our frame of reference, it has become fashionable among some self-styled photographic experts to damn out-of-hand all references to the distinctive contributions Stieglitz did make to the progress of American Photography, until 1902. Men of petty little minds and gritty little souls will apparently always be with us. Among their favourite adjectives are Prussianesque, arrogant (the most popular), pathetic, bitter, irrascible, *ad infinitum, ad nauseum.*

Parenthetically, I might mention that I've often wondered why the current generation, the unwashed and the biologic mistakes of nature, become instantly paranoid by the word "arrogance". Perhaps the mere word itself is capable of revealing their non-importance to themself.

THE FACTS:

Stieglitz became interested in Photography while studying engineering in Germany. He also enrolled in art-classes, and it was through people he met in the art-classes that he first became aware of the medium. He took to Photography with enthusiastic German single-mindedness, and in time became as doctrinnaire in his views of Photography as H.P.Robinson had been before him - chiefly, that Photography and Art were the obverse and reverse sides of the same coin.

When he returned to the States he set about to demonstrate that Photography deserved the same reverence long accorded Art. He failed, but that is immaterial at this point. He did, however, provide all of us some excellent traditional *pictorial* Photography, prior to the advent of Photo-Session. He also wrote in most of the then-existing photo-media, and gave numerous talks to various camera clubs which abounded around the turn of the century, although he rarely ventured out of New York.

But there is a fleeting irony here in that rather than Photography-As-Art, his writings and his talks generated a fleeting fame to several minor American artists, such as O'Keefe, Marin, Hartley, Englehard, McLaughlin, and someone named Smith. Only in general terms can it be said that he aroused a vague public awareness of Photography as something special and distinct.

His publication *Camera Work*, short-lived though it was, is probably our most important historical American photographic literature. I amn't thinking of the actual prints that were hand-tipt into its pages; rather, its importance lay in the fact of its existence at that time. It represented a staring point for the formation of genuine photographic precepts and principles. Prior to and concurrent with *Camera Work* were many photo-media, annuals, handbooks, sales literature, but none reflect-

ed Photography as an ongoing calling of inherent disciplinary precepts and principles. Stieglitz was the first to suggest that it did, and sought to prove it in his own way, albeit in a misguided way. However, we all owe him full marks for his labour, in as much as he undoubtedly saved much pioneering and experimental labours for future photographers.

Käsabier, Strand, Steichen, among others, were initially attracted and then repelled by Stieglitz's attitudes and pronouncements anent Photography, and later even more doctrinnaire pronouncements on what was Art - or, rather, what he felt it should be...which was no art at all. I can recall yet another of his ilk, who also fancied herself to be the centre of the Art universe, Gertrude Stein, and whose pronouncements were as doctrinaire, and as meaningless.

Paul Rosenfeld, the perceptive and influencial literary and music critic, was my literary mentor. It was Paul who introduced me to such literary lights as Sherwood Anderson, Allan Tate, e.e.cummings, Djuna Barnes, Kenneth Patchen, Georgia O'Keefe, John Matin, among others - all aggressive chasers of an American aesthetic experience. In return, I introduced him to people such as Henry Miller, Anaïs Nin, Bravig Imbs, Michael Fraenkle, all of whom had fled Paris as the Nazis moved in. I mention Paul here only because at that time he was involved with trying to revive interest in O'Keefe (Stieglitz's wife) and Marin, and we had long discussions about Art and Photography at 291 Fifth Avenue.

I also recall that he was a bit upset that I did not share his all-out enthusiasm. My reaction had been intuitive: being a caulic Kelt, I still go by intuition, and I have noted of late that contemporary art-critics (without any sense of smugness at all) have come round to my initial reaction - that is, that both O'Keefe and Marin are minor artists of the American scene.

THE UNANSWERABLE QUESTION:

Does Stieglitz deserve his curious position as grand panjandrum of American Photography? The question is unanswerable, nor is anything really lost thereby. He was pivotal to our history and aesthetique; and he established a major point of photographic reference for all of us. I feel his success or failure, in his own terms, is of no moment, any more than the unhappy love-life of Lister is of any moment to a student of modern medicine.

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VILLAGE STREETS

To have as much and to know as much and to acheive as much as anyone, and then turn away and thumb your nose at the whole damned business.....was that simply the traditional anarchy, the amorphous conceit of youth and inexperience?

That was frequently one of the intorted thoughts I played with when I wandered through the dirty Village streets at night, alone and self-contained. There should be an inherent significance in one's world, in one's private life. To seek a core, a meaning of *all* life, rather than being too much concerned with supplanting specious logic with spurious logic as to its meaning; forever building higher walls around the forbidden pastures of one's soul...a fluidal soul lying like a swamp-mist upon the stagnation of one's ego - capable, once, of assuming any shape or stance, and equally capable of evapourating at a thought.

I prowled the dirty Village streets night after night in a sort of unconscious routine - here one hour, there, another. I had discovered that there was a hard, unyielding rhythm to the Village after dark. Nine o'clock would usually find me sitting in the Jefferson Diner on Village Square, letting the coffee grow cold while looking casually out upon Sixth Avenue. That was always the official beginning of night-life...

Taxis began flooding the streets, rolling down from the alien world north of Fourteenth Street, stopping before the over-piblicised, over-priced, over-smelly joints along Eighth Street. They vomitted fares filled with empty laughter upon the sidewalks, and quickly disappeared. Some stopt at Christopher Street, the fares would pile out, hesitate, to glance swiftly up and down, not knowing where to go, obviously expecting some phantasmagoria to unfold magically before them for their private benefit. They eventually disappeared down some side-street.

The women particularly fascinated me for awhile.

It was easy to spot the unmarried ones. What an astonishingly successful job they did of pretending! Attention, affection, compassion, animalism, all simulated; they reeked of it. Pseudo-consideration for their escorts oozed from them like pus from a rotted cadaver. They were grotesquely concerned with saturating the air with *odor di femme a schmoos*.

Petty ego-maniacs, growing more liquid with every passing glance, yet never quite flowing away; smiling suggestively, eternally fumbling under the table with your hands and other things; dipping forward and

blotting out the landscape with the perifery of buttressed breasts. At the slightest glimmer of anything even remotely resembling sense or reason, their tears would flow like milk from a cow with sick udders. Forms of mutilated reflexes set into action only by sex inferred - sexual cripples all their lives, perpetual wake-attendents to the ghost of Sappho...

The men were always the same, married or unmarried.

Then there was Seventh Avenue, South, after eleven o'clock, to drift from place to place, observing, listening, thinking, or doing nothing. Where people began to over-flow a place, I simply got up and wandered out again to the dirty Village streets. Those seldom-found but much-rumoured joints where "queers" were constant habitues held little interest.

"Anyone can become God! - all he has to do is get outside himself!

Paul had said the once, and it had caught on the ragged edges of my brain and had remained there. It was something to think about - the sickness of modern man, the bitterness and foulness of life everywhere. Wasn't it, in fine, but a refraction of *the sick man inside?* Too many people wasting their lives in turning in their own psychic excrement, the motion theirs, the goo.

That makes for Individualism, does it? Life can be a private affair limited only by the soul and the senses, can it? Something separate and unrelated? - in a pig's eye.

Individuals don't inhabit sky-scrapers or towering office-buildings. They don't write daily columns in newspapers or dabble in politics. They don't go around the country lecturing for one thousand dollars a stand, or stand in stinking department stores writing their names on the fly-leaf of meaningless books.

Individuals are indestructible. They have no Cause to espouse and they preach no Sermon, nor do they offer a Way Of Life to the masses; yet their age cannot escape the electric stamp of their having been. A disregard for the fitness of things and the rightness of people - something like that; the *Datura* will cling stubbornly to the mud at the bottom of the Ganges during a simoon, yet once there was a shepard boy named David...

But life, for me, was becoming a monstrous stone god turned forever away and unendowed with a sympathetic system of response. I had become a Keltic wanderer of the psychic bourne, stumbling, occasionally, upon the bones of some half-remembered wisdom, or the dust-filled imprint of some lost symbolism that once gave meaning to life.

Time would pass, and then I'd have the whole Village to wander around alone. After midnight, it abruptly became open and free of something alien to its inherent spirit, and the litany of the dirty, twisted streets began to make itself heard. The garish neon-signs were sapped of

their gaseous electric life; doors behind night-clubs burst open in grimy alleys and shirtless men in soiled clothes began rolling out huge cans of garbage and debrís. Cats seemed to materialse magically from the shadows and once in a while a huge, hurtling form would precede them, rats..

Eighth Street was always gloomy after midnight. The staggered street-lamps punctured the night quite ineffectually. A policeman strolled heavily by, as though his feet hurt him. A few lights glimmered on upper floors. A passing silhouette on a window-shade. Once a high-pitched giggle from some unseen "queer". Silence, and the dirty Village streets.

On Sixth Avenue the Waldorf Cafeteria would begin luring the lost souls from the streets, unkempt, sullen, ugly. They would huddle in the far corners and tightly wrap dirty fingers around the thick cup of hot coffee. They sipped it slowly. One cup would sometime last them until dawn. Some stragglers from the night-clubs would come in - feeling "too good" to go back to the meaness of their daily lives and destroy the illusionary state wherein they had found God in a bottle of Cutty Sark. Laughing idiocally, picking at food they really didn't want, snickering loudly at the patrolman who came in for a free cup of coffee.

MacDougall Street was utterly deserted; no lights showed and no life stirred, not even the furtive rats. Houses were dark and sullen. The same held for Manetta Place, Waverly Place, Charles Street, Cherry Lane, Sheridan Square, Christopher Street, Bedford, Bleecker and Barrow.....

The Village was settling down to its unrest but the Village streets came to life and began talking to you as you walked towards Washington Square at three in the morning. The voices of the streets - full of crawling things and the whisperings of...*what?*

The streets of Greenwich Village after midnight, where one may stroll for an hour and consume centuries,

The dirty Village streets - the alembic that fuses the soul-sick stuff of the dwellers with undiscovered galaxies of a never-never land, saturated with the odour of ottar of Hermaphrodite and stinking with heavy Sapphic sweat. Gutters slimy with garbage. The night wind, sultry and oppressive, heavy with immortal dreams...without a dreamer. The stench of something eternally sexual and decaying oozing from every intersexion. Begg s loaded with lice sulking in darkened doorways; empty fruit-carts gaunt and sickly-sweet in the shadows of a deserted shop along Barrow Street. And now and then the whirring of rubber tyres and the astonished gargle of shifting gears from a stray taxi-cab.

Life - the hint and the inference of it everywhere - and sex running silently like softly sliding silk.....

It was in the air, conjured by the voices of the streets, seeping

into the dead grey marrow of your bones, enflaming your pulse with the rhythm of unmentionable wonder. It sends you hurrying down the silent streets, peering into dismal alleys, glancing down bottomless mews.

A phantom world, really - of the mind. Phantom barges adrift on a choppy sea of inexpressible anarchy flowing from the secret chambers of your soul; flowing through your eyes and out onto the dirty, dirty streets.....all this conjured by the whisperings of the streets.

All this... and then it is all sucked down into the cracks and crevices of the dull cement and sagging asphalt. Time comes to a stagnant stop, life blenches, and the high-road to Hell is paved in indigo.

There is something heroic about the dead language of the streets of Greenwich Village after dark. Their whisperings can drive you mad after awhile.....

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LITERARY ANTECHAMBER

(NOTES ON VICTORIA's ENGLAND)

Today, too much of our literature is willed after a commercial pattern and poems masquerade as rhetorical jingles (made more artistically valid by the enclosure of a box-top and ten cents in coin). We tend to forget what genuine literary acheivement really is. While we may still find an Englishman making nostolgic references to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, or even the Great Dehli Durbar, and some who even admit the patent air of make-believe, we never find an Englishman who will mark it for what it actually was - Victoria's personal triumph over Time.

The close of the 19th century was an end of the ugliest and most dehumanising century of record, yet we are prone to treat it lightly because we have grown accustomed to existing in a world deprived of beauty and have been indoctrinated, even as the Victorians, with the idea that such deprivation is in the natural order of things.

It has been variously referred to as The Mauve Decade, The Yellow Nineties, *Fin de Siecle* - almost everything, in fact, except for what it really was - the afterglow of a philosophy that had failed. The Nineties were not so much a point in time as they were actually a reaction (inevitable) and a point of view (accidental). We may mark the mauve decade and its frenetic extravagance of talent as simply a protest against ugliness and a morality that was blighting an age - although that might make us appear rather charitable.

Its coterie beheld the world being reduced to mere numbers, where the standards of the crowd, the many, and the corporate mentality dominated everything, but their unprecedented frenzy of what was called creativity was but a trumpet blown in a gale. It was not outgoing and aggressive, but it was negative. It called attention to the cult of ugliness without offering a corrective creed.

Even casual purusal of the works of the most notable writers of the last century, from George Borrow, Austen, Landor through Carlyle, Dickens, Arnold, Tennyson, one is made aware of the extremely negative quality of their work, in terms of any general literary theory or purpose. It was inevitable then that the mauve decade would immediately create a theory, a law, a new coterie. The theory was invented by Gautier, packaged by Pater, and merchandised by Oscar Wilde. The law was epitomised

in the 11 volumes of *The Yellow Book* and the 7 issues of *The Savoy;* and its coterie listed such names as Moore, Condor, Whistler, Yeats, Wilde, Ross, Davidson, Cosgreve, Synge, James, Beerbohm, Beardsley, Crackenthorp, Thompson, Harris, and so on.

Yet with all their frenetic activity they never managed to do more than define what they were against - although we may concede that the mere act of defining is in itself an assertion, or an assertive act. If they mistook motion for movement, there were no criteria which would have made them aware of it. They were, oddly enough, aided by a pillar of Victorianism, Matthew Arnold, who unknowingly defined the enemy for them - *Philistinia*.

They evolved a tragic conception of life, as equally tragic as the life they were rebelling against, but it remained for Laurence Hope, alone, unaided, unrebellious and ten thousand miles away, to recognize and communicate the tragic *beauty* of life and love.

Against the earth-commoness of the crowd, the aesthetic ego must needs become assertive, and this the individual artists of the period managed with dispatch and aplomb, but in succeeding generations it was the intimate details of their private lives, the motivation of their grand affectations that maintain our interest and curiosity. In an age starkly impoverished by a lack of genuine artists, we are still forced in our aesthetic hunger to turn back to a handful of artists who were the ironical epitomé of the most vapid and sterile era of our time.

Even the seeming gaeity of the period was but the irrational reaction to a century that was sick. The mauve decade lacked the healthy impetus of spontaneity, and justified itself on point of brilliant artifice. The extreme artificiality of the period is made apparent when we realise that an artificial style called attention to the cleverness of its ornamentation and the smartness of its trappings, to where any genuine style becomes difficult to differentiate. Despite the seeming gay gestures, none carried with it a sincere reflexion of a real joy of life. Even at this late date we are more fascinated by how they said things that what they said.

We may accept without quibbling the rather general statement that man's inherent desires are much more complex than any externally acquired pattern will allow for. Psychologically, it has also been established that the more form and less dignity the artificial social pattern gives, will ultimately boomerang by eventually emphasising exclusively all that has been repressed or denied that was once natural. Thus, the mauve decade was not the beginning of a new aesthetic order, but the inevitable reaction of dehumanising ethics,the devitalising morality of Victorianism.

Ugliness, degeneration, evil and perversity - all suddenly

blossomed with pale and lep rous flowers in the steaming hot-house of Victorianism. I am endebted to Osbert Burdett for a summing up that I feel cannot be improved upon:

"It is still possible to enter a Victorian house that has survived from the middle of the 19th century. It is like entering the home of the Dombeys (Joneses) without the humour of Dickens to make the facts bearable to the eyes. The ornate over-mantle, bristling with mirrors and vases standing upon obtrusive shelves, was a continuous altar in honour of ugliness. It is extraordinary that such things should have been made. It is difficult to realise now that there were virtually none others to be had. Every object administered a mind diseased, to an artificial corruption of taste that is without parallel.

" The formidable mass of dullness and hypocricy was carried to such lengths that the product of the 19th century must be unique in the history of printing. The Victorian home is not misrepresented in, say, Dicken's first chapter of Domeby and Son. *The average was similar, and even worse. It is natural that we should shrink from such a conclusion, for it is the nature of evil to seem incredible as soon as it is recognized to be itself. The facts refuse to be explained away, and this ugliness inevitably led to the reaction of the Nineties...*

" An industrial society severs each of its victims from his roots in religion, in tradition, in such fundamental instincts as those for personal relations, for beauty in life. The modern European is now bred into a slave-society that he cannot understand, define, or even recognize, for industrialism establishes a state of slavery more corrupting than any previously know, because the master is not a man, but a system. With this it is impossible to enter into any but inhuman relations and in such an inversion of humanity all instincts become perverted at their source.

"Disinterested talents flourish, if at all, by the incalculable caprice that happens to add an irrelevant market-value. In this world except commercial keeness is that which it professes to be, There is little wonder, then, that the effect of all this upon the coterie of the mauve decade was to conform their weaknesses, and to warp their gifts."

I respectfully suggest that the above is also an harrowing indictment of this, our own age.

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THE MAID FROM MŰNSTER

Frl. HILDEGARD HOPPEN

aus **Münster**

She is small, almost petite, and moves gracefully for her size. Fluent in the major European languages, a compulsive traveller perpetually seeking the non-existent, she pushes at life aggressively, and her mind is like quick-silver. She is also moody.

At the University she majored in Applied Psychology, as is the fashion among her generation - less for career-orientation than an amorphous attempt to come to grips with the wonder of her Self.

Like first-year medical students who suddenly begin finding all manner of rare and exotic diseases in themselves and their chums after getting into the text-books, young students of psychology develop an immediate and obsessive concern for analyzing themselves. Hildagard was not different. I smiled indulgently, listened quietly, and said nothing. It would have been unsporting to point out the illogic of such a theses, and while it shouldn't be encouraged, as that would lead to a false premise for future conduct and values, it should not be belittled, either. She would be confronted by the real facts of life soon enough.

She has always been the sister-in-the-middle, that most awkward and uncomfortable position of familial positions. Her father favoured her younger sister; her mother favoured the older one. Her childhood reads like an almost classical case-history of a perpetual state of aggreived helplessness, spent in seeking childish ways to garner paternal attention and affection, and often as not, not getting it. She developed the inevitable love-hate relationship with her father, reminding me of Anaïs Nin. As she grew older and more aware of the world outside, it was extended to Things German - which was also inevitable. It seems to be traditional for the German psyche.

At 17 she thought that if a man kissed her she would become pregnant.And when she went with her oldest sister to but her first bra (her mother was too embarassed to go with her) she admitted to an extreme self-consciousness. Today, she does not wear bras, feeling that breasts standing free are more "aesthetic". As a child she dreamed of becoming the captain of a sailing ship, opening a specialty restaurant, becoming a horse-woman, sail small craft, and a linguist. She was also obsessed with motion-pictures, which would almost be deemed normal, whatever that inucuous word may mean nowadays.

Like most educated Germans, she is an intellectual romantic. The mere *idea* of a given or anticipated situation can move her more than the actuality. If it exists in her mind, it is more real, and that, too, is distinctly German. Once in Münster she needed the services of a dentist, finally selecting one because the office had flower-pots in the window. Like most of her generation she feels she must have "experiences", but only bits and pieces of her own choosing, so that she may really know life, herself, the world.

A compulsion to excel springs naturally from her role as the daughter-in-the-middle. Whether acquiring fluency in foreign languages faster than a fellow-student, or teaching herself how to handle a small sail-boat in a single afternoon, she is driven by the unrequited needs of her childhood. Once, when I had casually mentioned that of all Germans I had met, Frl. Hollmann of the Fair Complex spoke the most grammatically correct English, Hildegard immediately and with convixion said:

"Then I'll learn it better!"

She was not joking.

Her father had been a superintendent of a coal-mine in Westfalia, a short, squat man, industrious, single-minded in all his convixion, authoritarian where his daughters were concerned; and had the odd habit of repeating himself in louder and louder tones whenever his listener didn't understand what he was saying. *Biedermeir* would be apt, I suppose. Her mother, also short, was self-effacing and quiet in the presence of her husband. Her younger sister was an aggressive legal student, and had firmly entrenched concepts of the kind of materialistic world she was going to have. The older sister was considered the black-sheep of the family because she ran off to Paris to live with a boy-friend.

The family was Roman Catholic.

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When I took her to Ireland for a weekend, during which I was to cover the opening ceremonies of the Hanimex factory just outside of Cork, she was constantly looking and listening and thinking, but saying very little. The tour of the factory bored her, but Blarney Castle, despite the misting rain and the myriad of very narrow steps to be climbed to the famous stone, absorbed her completely. She poked into every nook, walked along every narrow battlement, and said nothing until we had returned to Cologne.

On the return trip, we had to change planes at Heathrow airport, outside London. While we waited, she wandered directly into the Tax-Free Shop - which seem to always fascinate her, regardless of where we went. She wanted to buy a present for her father, and settled for a large bottle of *Tabac* (made in Germany) after-shave lotion. It was a lotion I had been using. She then came over to me, sniffed my cheek, and said:

"So that's what my father will smell like!"

She once remarked that people in public always looked at her when she was happy as a natural consequence. When I asked her what really made her happy, without hesitation, she replied that she did not know. When she referred to her flat in Münster as being unconventional I asked her: relative to what? She was vague. Apparently, her prized possession is a print by Paul Klee, a rather hidious black-and-yellow display of vertical bars, signifying nothing. When I asked the obvious question of what it meant to her, she was vague. Her favourite music is that of E. Satie. The lack of disciplined and broadly relateable form in both Klee and Satie still exert a facile fascination upon the unformed mind. But, then, we all live through it, and life goes on, although I have forgotten why...

There was another incident at Heathrow that may be considered

another manifestation of the modern Germsn psyche. Having wandered through the tangle of conflicting floors, abrupt structural changes, and senselessly placed shops, we stopt in a cafe operated by Hinus. The pork-pies were greasy and the coffee atrocious, but the place gave us shelter from the wild winds which made wandering around outside unpleasant.

A taxi-stand stood directly across from the cafe, and on noting it, I suggested that we make a quick trip to London,swing around Picadilly, go through Bond and Regent Streets, and return to catch our plane, whose departure was still hours away. Without reflexion or hesitation, she said:

"It wouldn't look right in this weather - it is too grey and chilly. I want to see London when everything is right, under ideal conditions!"

When I suggested, humourously, that she wanted to see London as the travel-folders depicted it, she unself-consciously admitted it. And my mind was once again thrown back to contemplating the historical German psyche, and its current manifestations. I was silent awhile amid my musings, and then she smiled slightly and said:

"That's very German, isn't it?"

And had we not been in a public place, and had I not been aware of her conventional moral code (in public), I would have kissed her, then and there. But I didn't. She was also too young to make love to, and if that sounds strange, it really isn't. Because I am a 19th century man forced to do penance by living in the 20th century, I am naturally reflective of the *morés* and *tabus* of another time, another place. Had I been 30 years younger.....but I wasn't, and my growing knowledge of Hildagard was a space in time isolated from the complexities of my own life like a fly in amber; or perhaps more aptly, a period in my life that belongs under a glass-bell. As Robert Nathan so plaintively wrote:

"Where I come from no-body knows,
And where I'm going, everything goes;
The wind blows, the sea flows,
And no-body knows....."

Hildegard was the product of a life-process that is mired in its own complexities, most of them historical. It is perhaps unfortunate that her multi-national "boy-friends" - which she seems to need in much the same way as she needed the favour of her father - have all been of her own generation and, as such, were more bemused by the magnificence of their own ego than seeking to understand the needs of Hildegard.

She has a most marvellous potential both as a woman and as a human being, and while I was more than a bit bemused by the feelings she aroused in me, they never-the-less tended to confirm my beliefs in the

traditional and natural man-plus-woman relationship. That such feelings could be on me at this late stage of my life created a momentary ambivalence, which took awhile to get over.

The following comments, selected from my Notebooks made at various times, are direct quotations, and indicate the questing, pushing, wondering mind of Hildegard:

"I don't know enough about politics, since I keep away from papers that make me angry...I wonder how the German market will ever succeed as long as the Federal counties within Germany don't practice co-operation...One-way affinities frustrate me, sooner or later...I used to live quite in seclusion and still do not join others easily. Their sociability is different from mine...I feel the Greek psychic welfare is not institutionalised because their society is far more 'human' than here, where people claim to have rights but no duties towards each other, and feel anonymous...Sometimes, at a soiree, the oat pricks me, and people don't take a fancy to me then...No alcoholics for me! - my boy-friends have been French, Greek, English, Brazilian. I don't like the young Americans I've met here...My father objected strongly to my going out with a French student, but when the French student became a successful businessman, my father was just the opposite...I remember being in Belgium with my English boy-friend, and it suddenly occurred to me that in all the months we had been together, we had never laughed - really honest laughter, so I left him on the spot!...I don't like to see old women reading Neu Review - yes, I do read it myself...old women shouldn't be interested in sex or pictures of naked men and women....."

* * *

From the little maid from Münster I learned a bit more about the subtlties of the modern German psyche in a short period of time, and, as the Irish say, she has a long favour on me. And had I actually been 30 years younger at the time, I would have been unreasonably elated to take literally the message she left on my hotel dresser when we had said our last farewell:

"I have given you my heart - I have nothing
else to give you!"

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The RISE & FALL of the GREAT GERMAN PHOTOGRAPHIC TRUSTS

The collapse of the great German photographic industry came about in the late Sixties, and the reasons are unbelieveable. They had but recently produced some of the finest examples of photographic hardware in such marques as the Contarex Super Electronic, Adox 300, Pentacon Super, Baldamatic III, Ultramatic, Prominent II, and such.

It is too glib an explanation to say that the aggressive Japanese invasion of the world market-place over-whelmed them. What we witnesse d was a rather odd, but predictable, myopia, brought about by a traditional arrogant stubborness on the part of heads of such firms as Zeiss, Ihagee, Voigtländer, Rollei. They simply would not, or could not, accept the fact that their century of global photographic pre-eminence could ever be so successfully challenged. Even Dr. Franke of Rollei, as late as 1972, in a speech given at a Photokina dinner, declared assertively that Germany had always led the world in photographic hardware, and always would....!

That the Japanese invasion was successful cannot be gainsaid, although it might be pointed out that such success could not have been brought about in Germany without the co-operation of Germans. Their chief concern was obviously not for the good of Photography, *per se*. (This is not a peculiarly German trait!)

Unprepared for the Japanese invasion, having no experience with competition of such magnitude, aggressiveness, and financing - a very important consideration - the great German photographic industry paniced. Cartels were hastily formed, smaller firms were either absorbed or went out of business, banks became major share-holders and literally dictated the survival or the death of many an old-line firm - the unsuccessful merger of Zeiss and Voigtländer being an excellent example, and even Agfa needed the support of the Belgium firm of Geveart.

And for the first time, after the initial shock had passed, German firms began setting-up assembly plants in foreign places, due in part to the increasingly high cost of German labour, but also as a survival technique. Foreign distributors were dismissed and extensions of home-offices were established, usually on a much less lavish scale than their former distributors had managed. Yet with it all, the great German photographic industry seems to have become simply a matter of historical pho-

tographic interest, which is rather sad, despite the fact that this has become an age that is too cheaply cynical and avaricious and too self-centered to really comprehend sadness....

This is painfully obvious at Photokina at Cologne since the early Seventies, wherein Photography, *per se* - the initial basis for the Photokina - has been diluted more and more by the catering to manufacturers of gadgets and devices for what is euphemistically called "electronic imaging". While the initial panic has subsided, remnants remain and are noticeable. Also noted has been the increasing decline of photographic hardware and the increasing emphasis on institutional equipment spawned by multi-national corporations, whose interest in Photography is dubious, at best. The economic feasibility of a personal darkroom, for example, has been destroyed by nationally oriented processing laboratories, and it is only such labs that can afford the massive equipment now being displayed at Photokina. The irony is at once apparent when one pauses to consider that it was the working photographer who made Photokina possible in the first place.

Actually, there is something vaguely pathetic and distinctly melancholy about wandering through the modern Photokina.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING:

While Eastman was relentlessly creating a world-wide trust of photographic materials and hardware, there was going on in Germany something that was never equalled in the U.S. - a precision camera industry.

While no German manufacturer, then or now, ever really was in a position to compete with The Trust, as Eastman's empire was tagged by the press, it is equally true that The Trust never produced precision cameras on the German basis. What good cameras that did carry the Kodak marque were all produced in Germany - Duo-620, Retina, Recomar, etc.

Eastman set out to monopolize the national photographic experience here. By contrast, in Germany, despite its ultimate destructiveness, open competition was encouraged not only on secular levels but by the Imperial Court. Thus we find Dresden becoming the "Rochester" of Germany, with prizes and awards offered annually from the State for the best designs in camera bodies, optics, shutters, accessories, and such.

It was under Imperial patronage, for example, that we came by many of the features we now accept as standard on all cameras, not the least of which was the original formula for Schott/Jena glass, which is still used by hundreds of lens designers, including the Japanese. Exclusive of Voitgländer, the oldest of the ultimately combined companies opened shop in Dresden in 1862. This was before Eastman got rolling, as they say, but not before the first photographic journal was published in Philadelphia. The German shop was set-up by one Richard Hüettigg. His

first products were studio and field-cameras of the 2-in-1 sliding box type. They were offered in 8x10 and 10x12 formats.

Other firms which were subsequently combined in order to survive were Goerz-Kruegener-Ernemann. Kruegener produced hand-cameras after the introduction of roll-film, and was also responsible for designing the spring-loaded pressure-plate for view-camera backs - still a feature of all modern designs. Gorez, as we all know, introduced the first true anastigmatic objective in 1891. Goerz also invented the first focal-plane press-camera, called *Anschuetz*.

In 1889 Wuensche joined Kruegener, their trade-mark becoming the initials K-W enclosed within a diamond border. They produced a variety of cameras for all formats, including the first practical reflex-box camera. They developed the stirrup-front for non-self-erecting-lens cameras, a feature, again, that is still very much with us.

Carl Zeiss, oddly enough, was never a camera manufacturer, there when Photography was very young. The prominence of Zeiss came much later. He produced microscopes and telescopes. When he commissioned Dr. Rudolf to design a lens using the new Schott/Jena glass, he was still thinking of microscopes and microscopes and microscopes. When the superiority of the new glass became apparent, he turned his attention to objectives for cameras. The first lens was the *Protar*, which led to the *Planar* series, which led to the well-known *Tessar*. (While these names are still in use today, they do not represent a straight-line continuum.)

It was Zeiss who coined the word "anastigmat", although it was hardly proprietary, as von Hoegh, when he designed the first commercially feasible anastigmatic lens for Goerz, had patented it under the name of *Dopple Anastigmat*. The *Tesars* did not come along until 1903, and contrary to many myths still current, did not represent a new kind of glass, but simply a refinement of the *Protar* design. The chief difference was a reduction in the number of elements and the introduction of an air-gap.

The air-gap between front elements resulted in a startling increase in optical contrast, called "optical brilliance" by early writers; and is very much a part of ever lens designed today. Zeiss did set-up a small factory for awhile to produce a focal-plane press-camera called *Palmos*, but it was short-lived. The strong popularity of the focal-plane shutter has always been under-estimated here, for some strange reason.

In 1902 another compelling event occurred - the Nettel Camera Works was established at Sontheim. They went immediately into producing hand-cameras with focal-plane shutters. In Stuttgart, the Contessa focal-plave cameras were introduced in 1910, but, as with Nettel, they were soon producing a myriad of hand-cameras with lens-mounted shutters, and their products were fine, precise examples of the state-of-the-art. Then came the Kaiser's war.....

THE POST-WAR YEARS; No. 1:

In 1919 Contessa and Nettel merged in the first of the great amalgamation which was to become the hall-mark of the Twenties. Their combined produce during the next five years was outstanding. Zeiss had long been the dominant manufacturers of objectives, and an important support of the research conducted by the Schott Glass Works. It was the Zeiss board that first moved to bring a bit of order out of the plethora of marques flooding the market-place. Each German camera manufacturer was concentrating on his speciality or dramatising his exclusive albeit minor features.

Such design specialities were jealously guarded as trade-secrets, thereby making over-all improvements for the camera industry rather sticky. The German precision camera industry, in other words, was mutating, and all progress was horizontal.

Zeiss successfully amalgamated Wuensche, Küttigg, and Zeiss. This immediately did away with a multiplicity of models, permitting truly new cameras to be produced which incorporated the best features of all the companies which had been amalgamated under the single marque created by Zeiss - *ICA*. Zeiss then amalgamated Goerz, Ernemann, Contessa-Nettel. Needless to say, many a fine camera immediately disappeared from the market-place, in the interests of economic profits.

Contessa-Nettel models continued to exist for awhile under their own name, with some vestiges of their origins; first as roll-film cameras, then erratically as cameras limited to the 35mm format. All were dropt from production in the late Thirties, when Zeiss decided to concentrate on the *Contax* - Zeiss' answer to the *Leica*.

THE POST-WAR YEARS; No. 2:

And now we come to a very fascinating fact about the German camera industry...after both German-instigated world-wars, it was the camera industry in Germany which was the first of their wrecked technologies to start-up again, and all within one year after the War's end - with massive *foreign* aid, chiefly from the U.S.

The story is well-known of how the U.S. Military "kidnapped" the top-management and patents of Zeiss and Schott and others before the Russians could get to them, and ensconced them in Allied territory - which they apparently did not object to. After the Kaiser's War, legal suits were brought against ANSCO here for conspiring with Agfa; after Hitler's War, similar suits were brought against ANSCO, resulting in the demise of ANSCO and the emergence of that odd conglomerate known as GAF.

Zeiss emerged stronger than before, with subsequent control of such as Voigtländer, Schott, Gautier, Dekel-Compur, etc. Zeiss was, with

no contest, the greatest of the great German trusts. Amalgamations became rampant in the post-war years - Agfa absorbed Mimosa and Perutz, and promptly ceased production of some fine photographic materials; DuPont absorbed Adox, and promptly stopt Adox camera production, eventually ending-up by licensing a firm, State-controlled, in Czechkoslovakia to produce their ultra-fine grain film; Steinheil, Gorlitz, Meyer, among others, well-known names all, fell by the wayside - *am Weg*.

A few firms remained independent, but not totally so, such as Tura,Argenta, and Bilora surviving in a drastically curtailed market. Such old-line marques as Ihagee and Practika were, of course, hidden behind the Iron Curtain. In Dresden, Kombinat Veb Dresden now control all photographic produce in East Germany, and it might be mentioned that it was the East Germans who first made overtures to the Japanese to do business in lenses, shutters, camera bodies; while in Germany Dr. Franke was giving a speech in Cologne in which he said:

"Germany has always led the world in photographic development, that an obvious path exists from all parts of the world leading to Germany, and the world will still come down that path in the future!"

He was wrong, of course, but it was a striking example of the myopia afflicting a cartel wearing blinders. Just as Kodak now devote less than 38% of their over-all production to strictly photographic goods, German manufacturers are turning more and more to institutional equipment for the highest return, such as processing equipment, graphic-arts hardware, AV systems, video gadgets and accessories, etc. Hitler destroyed more than just the once pre-eminent German industrial base - he destroyed the dominance of the great German photographic trusts, and while the current professional German photographer is acutely aware of the deterioration of choice and ingenuity in his calling, voiced to me many times, all shrug and admit they can do nothing about it. I would have to disagree with that negative passivity, of course, but, then, I'm not German.

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"JERI SOUTHERN"

Of An Esoteric Night-Club Singer

PÓR GENEVIEVE HERRING...

Me dehaste sin pasion - robáste pasion a su fuerza;
Sueños que me abrigában por años hiciste pedazos en sola una hora;
Destruiste la arcilla de los dioses que yo répare,
Tus labios protestarou inflamados, me olvidé demis dioses;
Mátase las ilusiones hablano y descubriste me disfraz -
? Porque? - nunca te diji que quice ser sabió! - d.h.m.

* * *

In a field where frenetic stylized singing is in vogue and all sorts of restrictive vocal mannerisms substitute for talent or ability, Jeri Southern is a superb talent moving freely.

With every round white syllable she loosens from her larval throat there comes the sense of something hyperborian, half-forgotten, lost and lonely, rendering you dumb to everything else while it lasts. And because her talent is not handicapt with cheap eccentricies, her great white singing comes through whole, a direct communication from a boldly imaginative temperament, a fever and an excitement.

And yet, you really do not *hear* Jeri - rather, you *experience*

her and her great white singing; and then you seek, restive and bewildered, for something beyond the experience in the insupportable silence which follows. It is as though her singing filtering through your filose senses, awakens vast ancestral longings we might have known a thousand years before the Flood. And all the while she sits at the piano, seemingly aloof, alone, something enshrined under a glass-bell conjured by her own private alchemy.

The sight of Jeri Southernis:as narcotic as her voice.

Ever so often you encounter a face that, once seen, will ineffably fog and tinture your memory all the days that follow. In time, its memory can become an intangible pain. It may be a face glimpsed on a city street, across a restless railway station, amid a rushing throng, or spot-lighted over a piano at the end of a mirky tunnel framing a nightclub bar. Wherever it happens to you, you never forget it.

Jeri Southern has such a face.

She has a soft white nose that is wide at the nuzzling tip, and her grey-green eyes are changling things, like bruised and wounded butterflyes. Her eye-lids are deep-grooved, clean-etched, and rimmed with lilting lashes. Her mouth is all finely carved arches and muted corners, full of brooding. Her eyes and mouth impress you first; both are strange and lovely. And then you notice her forehead, the wide curve of her throat, her blunt nose and innocent chin - and then your eyes hurry helplessly back to her full, beautiful mouth.

She is also naïve...

As lapidarys are moved to awe by precious stones whose native lustre cannot be enhanced by cutting and polishing, just so does Jeri affect most everyone she meets. And it is easy to think of her in terms of precious stones, as easily as in terms of music, especially those melodies of the East that disturbingly tell of tawny dawns and mauve nights, and of white dreams drifting.

When she looks directly at you with her changling eyes, you are immediately conscious of interior emotional arpeggios, moiling minor music, a sort of cosmological harmony indigenous to that moment. The haughty humility of her face is reflected in her voice. It is one with all things that flow, with torn and silken laughter, quick and fragile tears, the colourings of the hours, the moodiness of things.

Jeri Southern is colour in a drab world.

You look at her and listen to her, and you vaguely remember a way of life that should not have been forgotten. And long after her magic has been removed, you go on remembering the exciting sight

of her and her great white singing, and all your days sintre into something ripe and rich and clustering.

Jeri Southern...is esoteric.

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The above was written when I was very young and had not yet acquired a disciplined ability to Conjugate-the-Verb, as Paul Rosenfeld used to refer to the art of authentic writing. Our subsequent love-affair did not disenchant me in regard to her singing, and while I may cringe a bit on re-reading the above - more from its transparent gaucheness and mindless romanticism than from the subject - I have let it stand, if only as an historical reference in my evolution as a writer.

She was born Genevieve Herring in a town named Royal, Nebraska; population 401. It boasted a barber-shop, a service-station, and a general store. Her father farmed a modest potato-patch, and one of the chores she and her sister performed was to pick potatoe bugs from the plants, for which their father paid them one penny for every 100 bugs they picked. In relating the story, Jeri paused after she had said that they each needed to pick 500 bugs to earn a nickel, then pensively said:

"Some days we could only find 482 or 490, which meant we only were paid four cents...what could you do with four cents?"

There was a pathos there that was the key to Jeri's inability to subsequently survive what "Bunny" Wilson referred to as "the shock of recognition". Had I been less bedazzled at that time, I like to feel I would have sensed the pathos and perhaps would have moved to alleviate the inevitable down-going of Jeri. But I really don't know.

She was born on the 8th of August in 1927. She was sent to the Notre Dame School for Girls in Omaha, where the Sisters found she had a instinctive talent for music, the piano, and singing - all of which they cultivated. Part of her training was singing in the dining-rooms of Omaha's better hotels, and playing her own accompanyment. She was 'discovered', as they say, by a Chicago agent, who persuaded her to move to Chicago, at the age of 18, where she was soon singing in neighbourhood nightclubs. A scout from Decca Records heard her one night, taped one of her performances, and sent it off to New York.

Decca offered her a contract, her agent capitalised on that by booking her into better and bigger nightclubs, and"Jeri Southern" was born. Within a year she had fallen in love with a trumpet-player from one of the clubs, married him - whereupon he immediately quit his job, to be supported by revenues from Jeri's records. Nine months later

her daughter was born, and a year later she was divorced. From then on her life was a round of touring the nightclub circuit around the country, more recording sessions, a role in a Walt Disney film, and eventually a house at Malibu.

Jeri never kept copies of her press-notices or handbills, or even copies of her recordings or answered fan-mail; but she seemed to treasure photographs and snapshots. She had a couple of shoe-boxes filled with snapshots and prints extending back many years, including those taken when she was an adolescent. Her favourite snapshot was the one that is at the heading of this article - seated on the lawn of a public park in Chicago, in a large floral print dress, a monstrous white handbag, and white shoes...it seems there is a pattern that is followed almost instinctively by country girls when they move to a big city, and Jeri was not different. It was inevitable.

Her snapshots taken before she went to Chicago show her with a face overly made-up in a semi-theatrical manner. Her hair-do and make-up changed with every mode reflected in the movie-magazines, and always did she look quite overly made-up and a bit sullen.

As for the faces of the myriad of other people shown in her haphazard collexion of snapshots, they were faces of Nebraska - lined and seamed in a way that made them appear like overly etched masks; gaunt cheeks and dull staring eyes and irresolute chins. Inarticulateness was there, along with anemic sensibilities. Expressions starved of delicacy, inhibited, defensive - and sullen. The same expression of dumb pathos could also be seen in the snapshots of Jeri while at the Notre Dame School, an expression suggesting the result of a parsimonious culture.

The boxes were of prints of family and relatives and Nebraska friends, which would suggest a great sentimentality on her part, and perhaps indices of a need that haunted her all of her life. The collapse of her marriage was a savage disillusionment from which she never really recovered, and even her second marriage to a radio announcer from Buffalo hardly brought her peace and the emotional security she so obviously needed. It was that emotional insucurity that brought us together, and for awhile, it worked well.

Nebraska faces...there is a school of thought that says eyes are windows of the soul and that faces are road-maps of character. I'm not at all sure, but Nebraska faces reflect an harrowing lack of any great external influence, a culture extremely provincial, a kind of psychic starvation. It was no wonder that Jeri swept out of its wind-swept wastes with a morbidly thwarted curiosity about life, plunge recklessly into the drift and anarchy of the first thing that seemed its antithesis - "show-business" - and emerge in her twenties as a rather neurotic albeit talented young woman.

She was never capable of realising that despite her

numerous "glamourous" appearances in fancy nightclubs("I've sung in the Black Orchid room!", she once told me with a lift of her head), she could not make the monumental step from the *fact* of existence to the fact of culture. What she, and many like her , mistook for culture was but the rather pitious trappings that comprised the phoney façade of show-business. She never learned to distinguish between the glitter and the gold, for she had no tradition behind her - only Nebraska... Nebraska, on whose frontiers culture falters before the elemental fact of mere existence.

For Jeri, born of a place where life was ever lived under the most marginal of conditions, had simply removed her private struggles into a world she believed would acclaim her remarkable talents, and never realize that such acclaim was an immutable denial of the psychological impossibility of her talent.

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Jeri Southern

PSEUDO-SOIREE

On Meeting Jeri Southern

There are some faces which, once seen, are never forgotten. There are also singers whose voices haunt the threshold of your memory for as long as you live. Jeri Southern has such a face and a voice.

These were my thoughts as I sat in the straight-back chair in her room at the Sherat n-Palace hotel in San Francsico, and tried to maintain a pose of indestructible tranquility while looking at her. She was relaxing across the bed on her stomach, in dungarees and a pale peach-coloured sweater that had flecks of rhinestones in it here and there. The word "hoydenish" suggested itself to me, offering a strong contrast to the picture she had made in the nightclub a short while before.

There, she had sat at the piano in a blue and silver gown, her shoulders bare, her head exquisitely sculptured and enamelled after the mode. Then, she had been more glamourous to look at, perhaps, but in the metemorphosis to the girl on the bed, she had gained a new fascination.

Her grey-green eyes surveyed the multiple occupants of the room through half-closed lids, the drink in her hand trembling with the sound of the ice-cubes tatting the side of the glass. An epicene, rather cadaverish creature sat on the bed beside her, giggling privately from time to time, touching shoulders with her, lisping bits of moribund wit for her private benefit.

His name was Bob, a singer with a second-rate quartet that had shared the progam at the nightclub with Jeri. They had struck me as fugitives from an undisciplined boy's choir, and when I had mentioned this to Jeri, she had said:

"Oh, they're all right - they just can't make-up their minds about whether they're 'queer', or just experimenting with life."

Once Jeri laughed softly at some sally from Bob and said:

"Honey, this boy is awful literary."

"You mean 'literate', dear," replied Ray, without looking at her. He was standing before a mirror, balancing a stuffed toy tiger on his left shoulder. Someone said:

"Tiger, tiger, burning bright..."

"In the stillness of the night," completed Ray, as he turned and placed the toy tiger on the dresser. He came over to sit beside me, in an over-stuffed chair with a dull florid print. Lane's eyes followed him owlishly. Lane was an announcer for a local radio program given over to housewivery and genteel gossip, and was apparently looked upon locally as Falstaff, Cyrano, and a court jester, all in one. He was under five feet, affected long hair, wore thick myoptic lenses.

When first we met I was immediately reminded of Louis- Phillippe's trenchent observation that the aspiration of a little man is always obvious - three inches over his head. Lane recited what he claimed was his own verse from time to time, unprompted, and all of the verses were heavy with pornographic allusions. The lines contained blatant overtones from such as Patchen, Benton, Cummings.For some obscure reason, I thought of Oscar Williams...pint-sized poets always seem to remind me of that meeting, years ago and gone, in New York.

"The party is stagnating," said Ray suddenly. *"It lacks cohesion. I expected it to move..."*

His eyes had been dancing restless attendence to the people in the room, the off-coloured walls, the bottles of whiskey and glasses on the dresser, to everything and everyone - in fact, to everything except Jeri. The night before Ray and I had left Jeri at the hotel while we went over to Foster's for coffee and small talk.

"Jeri suffers from insomnia when she's away from me," he had remarked, as we walked along Market Street. Later, in the cafeteria, he had said abruptly: *"Jeri's not an intellectual girl. She has the voice of an angel, and she doesn't know it!"*

I had looked at him, for the remarks had struck me as being totally unnecessary.

"My analyst says I'm not ready..," said Lane suddenly.

"That's good," said Ray. *"My analyst says I'm not ready - very good, Lane. You can take off from that in any direction. Go on."*

Other voices chimed in, admonishing Lane to recite. He sat angled on the edge of a chair, his myoptic eyes staring bovine-like about the room. When a moment of silence occurred, he began to recite. His voice was monotonously paced, although his diction was good. Upon revelation, however, the recitation did not live-up to its opening line, and my attention returned to the other people in the room...

Dexter was twenty-one, with a crew-cut and a pale pink face. Stocky and restless, he walked around the room in his stockened feet, as he new shoes hurt him. They had been made by Florsheim - *"Cost me twenty*

bucks!" he had protested to the room at large several times, without anyone paying attention. The shoes had tassels over the instep. One had fallen off, according to him,even before he had left the store. He then went on to relate how the salesman had been happy to take his twenty'bucks' but wouldn't give him any 'action' for the fallen tassel.

He spoke explosively, disjointedly, in an *argot* apparently in vogue with his generation. His utterances were studded with such expressions as: *I dig that - get the action - you see that act? - Jeri, you're dynamite!* - and many more, rendering intelligent communication rather difficult. He seemed to have something to do with publicity for several small nightclubs around the city. His ambition was to become a commercial radio announcer.

"What's a commercial announcer?" asked someone.

"Commercial - not a staff announcer - one who doesn't give this action: Transcribed, CBS," replied Dexter.

Once Ray went over to him and said:

"I'll give you a tip - never continue the next sentence in the same tone, always raise or lower it. For example: Always Buy Chesterfields, THEY SATISFY. Or, you can say: ALWAYS BUY CHESTERFIELDS - they satisfy. Do that with anything - Maxwell Coffee - anything."

"I dig that," said Dexter. *"I get the act. You're dynamite, Ray. No, I mean that, seriously..."*

Burkard was slender and dark, nattily dressed in blue flannels and a pale pink shirt. He was an engineer from KCBS, and had handled the mechanical requirements of the local radio program on which Jeri had appeared. A good-looking man of about forty, his great shock of black hair neatly combed, he sat immobile and silent most of the time, but was affable and overly congenial when spoken to. His wife, Sonny, was medium sized, with pointed features and a great tangle of dark hair. She chain-smoked and literally vibrated with an harrowing nervous oppression. Sitting on the other side of me, she would frequently turn and savagely whisper:

"What is someone like you doing here?...isn't it a strain?...don't you ever get tired?...what are you like?...you don't have to light my cigarette for me...don't you ever get tired of it all?...how long did it take you to speak like a foreigner?...are you really a foreigner?...the Irish aren't foreigners...what are you really like?...excuse me for living.

And ever so much more, over and over - strident whisperings, little burning eyes, useless smoking, nerves vibrating in her fingers, in her feet, in her neck, in the whole strained and desperate attitude of her body. One sought to wonder after her; one had no other liberty.

Lane paused in front of me, hands thrust habitually deep into his

trouser pcokets, tottering slightly on his tiny feet, and blinking at me myoptically. He slurred his words as he said:

"You accuse me with your eyes. Must you sit there and be superior just because you're a successful writer and I'm half a talent?"

"What makes you so defensive? I've never said I was a successful writer - only that I'm a writer."

"No!", said Ray abruptly from the chair next to mine. *"He's never said he was successful. He manages to LOOK successful. He's learned something we haven't yet..."*

Lane turned away and wandered towards the bed, to ease himself down and then stretch himself across a corner of it. My mind flipt back to consideration of Ray.....he had been a radio disc-jockey in Buffalo and used to play Jeri's recordings almost continuously, and often joked with his listeners that some day he was going to marry the girl.....they had been together now for nearly three years.

He had initiated this impromptu soiree. Just above medium height, physically well-set-up with pleasant, regular features, he was the sort of male women would immediately classify as attractive, without any dense qualification. His face was mobile, his elocution excellent. He was now a free-lance radio announcer in Southern California, operating from their home at Malibu. I learned later that he was not too successful.

The previous evening, when Jeri had introduced us, and when I casually mentioned I was glad to meet the man in Jeri's life, he had shrugged and said:

"Well, I'm not prepossessive about it."

He had smiled but had not looked at me when he said it.

He moved around the room mixing drinks and reciting some of his own modern poetry, encouraging Lane in his earthy recitations, exuding good fellowship, deprecating eulogistic utterances others made to him. He held forth easily and lucidly on casual matters, without being profound.

I had the impression of a terrible talent that had broken free of discipline and direction. He glittered like a many-facetted synthetic gem, superficially brilliant, obviously clever; yet one waited in vain for the glitter to burst into Gautier's immortal flame. I had the impression that his original talent had taken him to within an inch of glory - and marrying Jeri permitted him to deny his failures.

A little door opened along the dusty corridors of my mind and

I was suddenly back in the Village, years before, having dinner with Paul Rosenfeld, my mentor and friend.We had been talking about life and love and sex and the aesthetic experience in large letters, and at one point he held his fork over his plate and said:

"When the select man - be he poet, painter, writer - marries a woman he loves, he runs the risk of becoming content. It will spell the end of his creative endeavours and his ambition. He will consider acheiving a loving woman as greater than creative acheivement. If such a man marries unfortunately, then the inevitable bitterness and reaction will destroy his pristine abilities. If love inspires the select man, a happy marriage will suffocate his genius, and an unhappy one will strangle it. In either case, creative death is inevitable, for the select man's destiny never settles its accounts in consequence vicariously!"

And in this regard I thought about Jeri and Ray. I felt there was a story of some sort there to be found in their almost off-hand relationshio - a twice-told tale, perhaps, of confused or lost identities, of restrictive emphasis on all the trivial details of mere living, of consumptive frustrations and frenzied moments of love and re-affirmations.

Like all men of abounding mentality, Ray was a great talker, though not necessarily a conversationalist. And all fluent talkers frequently fall victim to their own bubbling phrases...like Sherwood Anderson, for example. I was thinking that when Sonny began assaulting my ears afresh with her savage whisperings. Ray took issue with her:

"That was an unkind thing to say, Sonny. It was cruel - you really shouldn't have said that. It was unnecessary."

*"Excuse me for living!"*said Sonny.

"No, Sonny, you have the wrong idea. No-one here dislikes you. We're all just sitting around with a few drinks and talking. You've been disagreeable all evening, but no-one has been disagreeable to you. What you just said to D.H. was a cruel thing - it was a hurtful thing. You shouldn't go around hurting people. There's enough pain and cruelty in the world. It's horrid. You were very unkind..."

And his voice rolled on and on in perfect diction and holding to the original thread of his thought. No-one seemed to be listening except Sonny and me. Finally, as though finding the imagery of pain and cruelty he was conjring a bit insupportable, he ceased speaking abruptly and buried his face in his hands. Sonny sat motionless.

This neurotic display of abnormal sensitivity could have been occassioned by the lateness of the hour, fatigue, or alcohol - it simply may have been Ray's sudden re-awakened awareness of himself and Jeri. I did

wonder fleetingly how great was his problem of integrating the woman on the bed and the woman the world hailed as Jeri Southern. And I remembered a line from an early Victorian writer: *"Men of authentic creative action have a sense of their own becoming and are invariably disagreeable; a man who is concerned with always being agreeable is usually weak."*

"You accuse me with your eyes," said Lane again, tottering in front of me, affecting a pathetic, naive pose.....

It was nearly four o'clock in the morning when it was abruptly discovered that there were no more ice-cubes, and that everyone was hungry. Several people seemed to become simultaneously engaged in calling Room Service, and flipping the pages of the Yellow Book.

Fresh ice-cubes arrived, and Dexter and Burkard went out.

The desultory conversations meandered on. Lane sat on the side of the bed and made a familiar observation to Jeri, who was standing in front of the dresser-mirror, combing her blonde hair. Bob floated out of the bathroom and wafted himself gently down upon the bed.

As Jeri turned to sit on the bed, the boy giggled something he had seen in the bathroom. Jeri started to laugh. She has a sort of half-laugh, a little, self-conscious dulcet sound that seems to catch somewhere in her wide white throat. Only this time she seemed to laugh a bit more heartily, throwing back her head as she sat down.

The gesture was a mistake, for the action apparently upset her depth perception and she just missed the edge of the bed. She slid sideways and as she threw up her arm to catch herself, her head collided with the telephone stand. Instinctively, I started forward, but caught myself and turned, waiting for Ray to move.

He went to her, but she was up and sitting on the bed.

"That was a silly thing to do, wasn't it?" she said.

Somebody laughed. Jeri lay back on the bed and it was then that we saw the blood. I was by the bed now as Ray bent over her. A superficial cut showed just under her right eyebrow. The blood was bright and red and thin. I looked at Ray, waiting for him to make a positive move. After all, he was her husband...

Bob still lay on the other side of the bed, oblivious to all that was transpiring. Lane sat stupidly on the edge of a chair. Sonny was whispering to her husband about going home. Dexter was happily mixing himself another drink at the dresser. My eyes flicked to Jeri's face, her closed eyes, the bright blood flowing. I saw the pulse beat heavily in Ray's throat. It was only seconds, but it seemed longer. He finally moved.

He went into the bathroom for a wet towel. Jeri opened her eyes and looked at me, saying in a low voice:

"It's nothing - only a scratch."

I dared not speak to her so I turned and spoke, perhaps a bit sharply, to Dexter, telling him to give Ray some ice-cubes for the towel. Ray returned with a towel, and ice-cubes..He bathed the bright red blood away and held the cold compress to her face. Jeri kept repeating that it was just a scratch. I glanced at Ray. His expression was intense, fluidal, and I saw again that baffled expression flit across his face - the confused sense of an identity lost forever but never surrendered. I reached down and placed my hand on his shoulder.

I returned to the straight-back chair I had, uncomplaining, sat in most of the evening, my eyes focussed on Jeri's face, dimly aware that no-one else in the room seemed to be aware of what was transpiring. It were as though all of a sudden they had all ceased to exist and the grey hotel room contained only Jeri and me and Ray: as though we three were suddenly caught-up and sintred in a plastic psychic drama of our own.

Jeri lay on her stomach, facing me, the cut under her eyebrow barely perceptible. She stared at me steadily through her vital grey-green eyes, and then she began to move her lips in a slow smile as she softly said:

"D.H. - I hope you haven't been disillusioned by all this."

And she made a vague gesture that included the whole room.

I started to smile, then laughed quietly to myself as I saw the tip of her soft white nose begin to wrinkle.....

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NOTES ON A "NOTEBOOK"

- PETER A. NICASTRO

Of all reviews published anent my writings, in all fields, the following review remains my favourite - for obvious reasons, human nature being what it is. It was originally published in STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY, one of the many titles of the PTN media empire. It has been included here as a perception of the personal relateability of my writings - which, after all, is the ultimate measure of merit.

The most significant photographic book of our time will undoubtedly be Volume I of THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NOTEBOOKS of D.H.MOORE, titled *The Face of Modern Photography*.

Like many others, I have read the writings of D.H.Moore in the pages of this and other magazines. I knew of the impending publication of Volume I of his NOTEBOOKS and I expected it to be a respectable piece of writing, both in content and literary form. However, I was not prepared for such a *TREMENDOUS* book - a book of *GREAT* substance, of deep-rooted meaning: a book that gets to the heart and core of Photography in the most personal way possible - and in a manner so intimate that any serious-minded professional or would-be professional can relate to.

This book is not to be read - it is to be *studied!*

It is literary, and from D.H.Moore one would expect a truly literary work. But the thoughts of the average working photographer are crystallized by these words of D.H.Moore. Where once you or I rested with vague feelings about this or that area of Photography, we can now read Mr. Moore's words, and our once vague feelings are crystallized into facts, understandable facts. We need rest no longer, for we can now relate our own life in Photography to the *whole* of Photography! Mr. Moore has set about to give roots to photographers, and he has succeeded admirably.

The Face of Modern Photography is a series of elegant essays, some of which have been previously published, many are new. They have been placed in an order to develop a number of thoughts and themes. They hold together as a unit, or may be read individually.

Mr. Moore has developed a *philosophy* for photographers.

This is long over-due. For years you could read or hear about the technique of making pictures, how to sell them, how to promote your wares, what equipment did what, endless charts and graphs, unedning rules. But out there among the hundreds of speakers and the multitudes of would-be teachers, none, save perhaps one or two, ever imparted to their listeners the urgency - no! the dire necessity for a photographer to have a *philosophy of Photography!* - which is of considerable more importance that what camera did you use. Again, Mr. Moore succeeds and brings to the individual photographer a philosophical base from which he can grow and expand. This is done with a sense of practical responsibility. In speaking of modern "professional" societies, he writes:

> *"...sentimentality over labels which employ the word PROFESSIONAL is of damned small moment when it comes to making the next payment on your house, the next payment on your motor-car, or you wife's fur-coat!"*

With keen perception and a flair for separating the chaff from the wheat, D.H.Moore makes us acutely aware of what has happened to professional Photography in this country during the last 20 years. One point, one bit of current behaviour seen over and over, he writes:

> *"This obsessive concern with dazzling other photographers - not clients - with an image as a photographer exclusively in terms of over-priced hardware is patently neurotic and unreal. Once, we would have been concerned with what others thought of our work and how we went about producing it. Now, it would seem, we are more concerned with what fellow-photographers think of our IMAGE as a photographer, created solely by how deeply and expensively we have surrounded ourselves with hardware!"*

Amen!

Mr. Moore's cutting bit is sharpened with Irish humour. In speaking of photographers as he sees them at many local and regional and national conventions, he notes:

> *"I am reminded of nothing quite so much as the Irishman who journeyed to the Vatican just to inform the Pope that he thought Catholicism was the grandest religion in all the world....."*

The author bemoans the fact that we have no national photographic critic, and thus we flounder. The writings in this book dilute that statement, for it now appears that if we in professional Photography do not have a full-fledged national critic, we certainly

have one in embryo in the person of D.H.Moore.

There is no doubt that the author is concerned with the direction taken by modern Photography. He is equally concerned with the individual photographer as he relates to and adds to the total happening of Photography. D.H.Moore does write for the individual. His book will be of little significance to the big operators, for they are only concerned with photo-reproduction, while D.H.Moore is concerned with the fate and direction of Photography, *per se* - a field of endeavour he refers to not as a job or as work, but as a "calling".

Appraisals are made of present day organizations in the U.S., as well as equipment manufacturers and available magazines. These writings will not be pleasant reading for those segments of Photography. The author places a responsibility directly on the shoulders of that group, stating:

"...a deep-seated moral and philosophical reform and a re-direction is urgently needed now, concerning the true meaning and function of professional Photography. All that is currently lacking is incisive and morally authentic leadership!"

The most consistent theme that D.H.Moore reiterates is:

"We must redefine the practice of Photography exclusively in terms of its historical continua."

And as the author interweaves this theme throughout his essays the reader develops a sense of photographic *being*. A miracle of transformation occurs, brought about by the words of D.H.Moore. The photographer-reader begins to understand that a knowledge and understanding of Photography's past is the secret direction of the future!

And suddenly one becomes aware that he is part of a grand thing - Photography! - and that there is a tradition in Photography, there is historical continua; and it becomes the obligation of every true photographer to comprehend that past and move its modern continuum forward, but with his roots in Photography's traditions.

When, recently, have you heard that Photography is a discipline? Mr. Moore makes the point and makes it well. Yet to merely state that it is a discipline is not enough. He examines and analyzes how we must work at this discipline. He concerns himself with photographic education, with teaching, with a *Quo Vadis* concern!

At times he is far out on the proverbial limb. He takes it upon himself, in the true sense of a rightful critic, to form value-judgements on the net worth and contributions of long established names in modern Photography. So it comes as a quick surprise to see the independent evaluation of D.H.Moore place some of the contemporary "gods" of Photog-

raphy into the slot of plain, ordinary human beings. I read:

> *"The magnitude of the intuitive element in a photographer's make-up is what separates photographers such as Beaton, Strand, O'Sullivan from such as Minor White and Hattersley."*

Further:

> *"People such as Minor White, Hattersley, Farber and such have probably written and uttered more arrant nonsense about the modern photographic experience than all prior generation of photographic writers combined."*

His evaluation of Ansel Adams, in contradistinction to that by Newhall, is sure to force the reader to take a closer look at the true photographic value of Adams. He writes:

"Adams has always exhibited a greater photographic authority in his writings than ever by his produce...Yet his frantic acclaimation as a photographer by failed journalism majors writing for our amateur media represents an obvious negative error of critical judgement, as the true PROFESSIONAL VALUE of his produce has never been made the subject of exhaustive investigation..."

Man!! Now there is a position unlike *anyone* in media today would dare to write. But D.H.Moore states it with authority, and gives the reader reason to pause and examine. What that examination reveals to you will be your own personal discovery, as it was mine. Among people known best in circles of organized Photography (PPA), the author mentions only a few as unique enough in either their work or philosophy to be of any significance in the modern continuum of Photography. Among those he does mention are Van Moore, Courneye Tourcotte, Wendell Powell, Charlie Abel and Adolf Fassbender.

Throughout this book the author demonstrates a knowledge and an understanding of Photography far superior to anyone I have ever read, living or dead. The key word here is *understanding*. He weaves together the past and the reality of the present, and speaks with unchallengable authority. One of the most fascinating essays (not to diminish the excellence of most) is the one entitled TO CHOOSE A PHOTOGRAPHER. As a second-generation photographer I have seen, over the years, many advertising campaigns created to "sell" professional Photography. Many efforts have been made to equate "us" with the other professions. All have failed.

D.H.Moore's TO CHOOSE A PHOTOGRAPHER is the finest piece I have ever seen. He develops the theme of what a photographer represents to a client. I, as a practicing professional photographer, would like to send a copy of this essay to every one of my clients and potential clients. It is a masterpiece.

* * *

FOR WANT OF A UNICORN

PETER A. NICASTRO
1924 - 1978

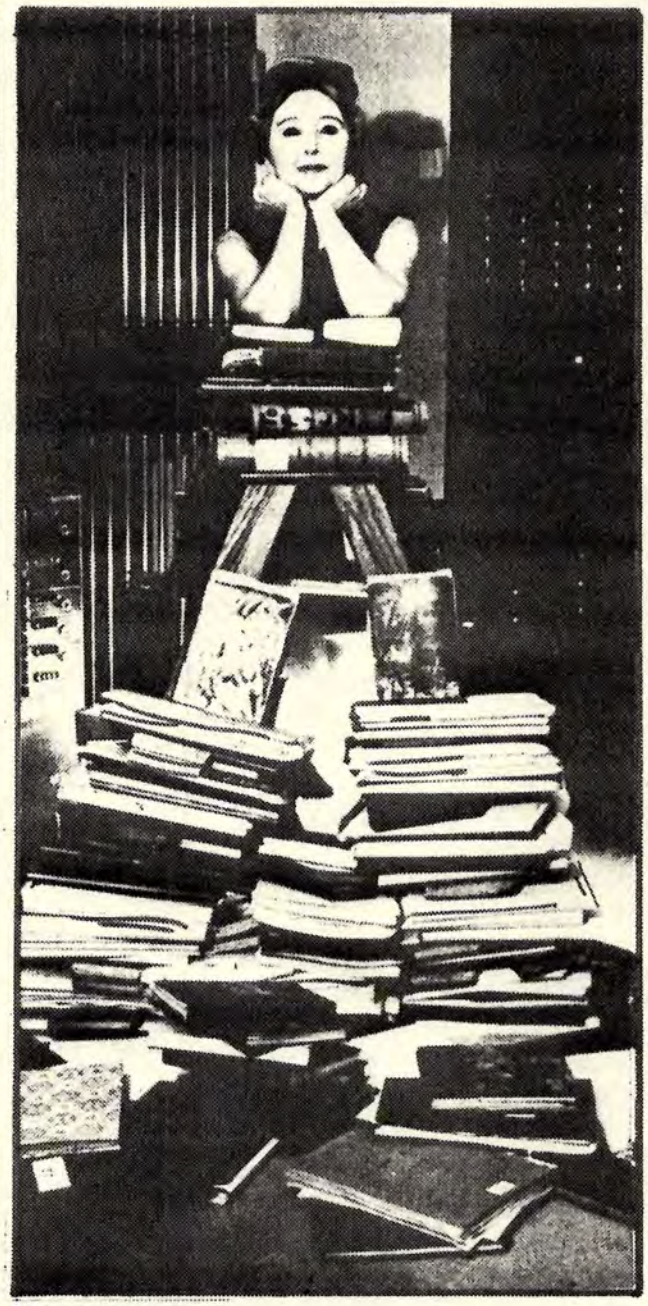

Photo: Marlis Schwieger

Notes On ANAÏS NIN's "The Diary"

Like all caulic Kelts I began my literary life as a poet, quite at ease with the posit that all our wars had been merrey and all our songs had been sad.

The great and perpetual challenge of my youth was that of mastering the intricacies of the language of the Sassenach. Today, I easily admit to being aware of the ongoing nature of that.

And in time it came to pass, aided by the wee folk who came to me with my caul, that I'd meet great literary men and women, and the ever present legion of pseudo-aesthetes who can always be found fluttering around such people.

The names of those I have met - who undoubtedly tolerated my naivety and uncultured brashness out of that remarkable charity all truly talented people evince - would undoubtedly fill a good-size volume. Names that tumble immediately across the threshold of memory include O'Casey, Shaw, Miller, Nin, Anderson, Fraenkel, Rilke, Wolfe, Dali, Stein, and on and on. The excruciating self-consciousness of youth precludes one fully appreciating the marvellousness and passionate wonder such encounters . In retro-

spect one is oddly grateful, and as oddly humbled in latter-day realisation. And, of course, there was the meeting with Anaïs Nin.....

I would write awhile of Anaïs at this late date, to clarify a few private thoughts in retrospect, and to finally lay the ghost of vague aesthetical doubts which have haunted me for many years.

From the very beginning, wherever she was, everyone seemed to have trouble with her name. I have heard some weird pronunciations even now, when her DIARIES have become cult symbols. Her name has always been pronounced Ahnah-ees. She once explained to me how Strindberg had invented a name for "lunatique", and she had been moved to invent a name for herself which, in French, privately meant "night-bird". Had I been as wise and as clever as I then imagined myself to be, there in the mispent days of restless youth, I would have recognized her invention and explanation as further indication of the sublime artificiality I have but recently discovered in re-reading her.

Her public life has been too-well documented, albeit fragmentarily and reflective of a strong adolescent bias in her favour by many of lesser talent, to merit repetition here. Let me state at the outset that while half a dozen references to me occur in the DIARIES, it is not of such references that I would write, even though it was reflecting upon such references that triggered the impulse to commence this essay.

The impetus was re-inforced, I suppose, by the slightly shocking awareness, after all these years of holding a fixed and final impression of Anaïs , that in the DIARIES she had actually handled the truth rather loosely on almost every level - despite her decades of protestation anent writing only truth.

(I should explain, perhaps, that Anaïs always referenced her DIARIES as singular, even though their compilation comprises dozens of chap-books, as shown in the lead-in illustration. They were commenced when she was 11 years old, and which now, in their original manuscript form, reside in a bank-vault in Brooklyn.)

I feel the DIARIES of Anaïs Nin are phoney.

I debated with myself a long time before putting that thought on paper. The reasons were complex, and rationalisations produce an ambivalence that would difficult to explain in communicable terms. It is a normal hazard in growing-up to encounter disillusionment again and again. Illusions are part of our naiveté as untried youth, our innocence, baseless arrogance (vanity). The ability to suffer disillusion and then go on, has always been the mark of the mature mind. My affection and vague awe of Anaïs goes back more than 35 years. Only lately have I realised that the affection was and is intellectual,

and that my affection, while sincere, was a by-product of the instinctive awe youth knows when encountering a finite and recognized talent.

But there is no ambivalence about my feelings towards my role as critic, and it was this realisation that permitted me to write the sentence as I did. It proved two things, I feel: my critical faculties had matured to where they were no longer susceptible to emotional colourations; and the mere passage of time had diluted the awe to where I could step back from myself and assay correctly the reality. Also, of course, it made Anaïs rather human - a proposition we would never have countenanced just a few years ago...

When first we met she was even then secretive about her age - which should have told me something, but didn't. It was a psychological key to the woman, obviously, but what does one know when one is young? She was also reluctant to go out during the day,preferring the evening and candle-light for illumination. It was several years later that I came by the French epigram: *"By candle-light, all women are fair!"*

In the so-called photographic supplement to the DIARIES I saw that all photographs of her taken after 1933 were with what used to be known as soft-focus. That she, herself, insisted on soft-focus photography was another psychological key that I did not know enough to turn in those days. However, I would not presume to judge her vanity, as I did learn early on that Freud was quite in error when he insisted that sex was mankind's strongest drive - it isn't, it is Vanity! - a most relentless and irrational drive, to which the world and his wife are heir to.

She wrote and spoke even then of her writings as *"Images!"*, in which, in her own words, she sought to describe the secret, inner selves of people whose lives impinged upon hers. In reflecting on that stated premise, I suddenly realised that were one to read all of the volumes making-up the DIARIES, one would never come by a full-fleshed image of Anaïs! - neither as a woman nor as a writer of esoteric literature! Her own "secret, inner self" remained secret. This bespeaks a rather rare and highly disciplined *politicised* literary talent. I cannot say whether Anaïs practiced this verbal slight-of-hand deliberately, nor do I feel it is really important. Her ultimate place in contemporary literature must stand or fall exclusively *HOW* she wrote, not *WHAT* she wrote. In terms of literary themes, Anaïs had but one - the world as she judged it.

All of her writings, including the DIARIES, are examples of extreme literature, subtly textured word-images and barbarically coloured flights of imagination. The word most frequently used by those who tried to review her published writings was always "esoteric". Her writings can never be termed "exotic", although that word appealled to her. Had any of the would-be reviewers stated that she wrapt word-images in cotton-candy that evapourated before you could taste them, they would have been

much closer to the mark.

* * *

photographed by Carl Van Vechten in New York, 1934

I find it significant that among college-students, among whom the writings of Anaïs have created another mindless cultism, when question-closely about her appeal, have been unable to articulate intelligently - that is, in a communicable form so as to be understood, the fascination they insist they feel for Anaïs and her writings. This may be to the discredit of neither, but in looking back to the time when I was of that class, my awe of Anaïs had not rendered me inarticulate. In fact, it was a rather over-ripe laudatory piece I wrote on her and Henry Miller that brought us together - *en passant*.

Her allure and attraction was and is, I would say, quite in harmony with the inchoateness and inarticulateness of youth - the imprecieness of feelings, the vagueness of internal conjurations, the cotton-candy aspect of youth's convixions about life (always spelled in large letters). I also recall, now as then, that the majority of youths who constantly buzzed about her were "queers", full of arty protestations against that which they never defined.

Because vanity in youth is more monstrous and obvious than it is in old age, it follows that one of youth's constant pre-occupations is with the finding of mirrors - but special mirrors - mirrors that will reflect an idealisation of youth's vanity. And while we all come to know, in time, that mirrors have no image of their own, I have long felt that Anaïs' appeal to youth down through the years has been due in a very large measure to that odd ability she has, through her writings or her presence, to function as a thinly silvered mirror partially fashioned by the rapt attention of her youthful admirers.

This notion gained an impressive validity in my mind of late in my deliberate remembrances of the time when we all fluttered about her, gauche, naive, inchoate. She sought out the young, especially "queers" even in Paris, over whom she held sway like a queen-bee. This is hind-sight, of course, but it derives its validity from noting in the DIARIES that whenever she makes a reference to older men - Edmund "Bunny" Wilson, for example - such references are always biting, slightly snide, and with an inexplicable bitterness.

I am well-aware of her ill-fated childhood and her love-hate relation with her father, but in references to older man (actually they were usually of her own age group!) she also tended to handle the truth loosely. I, too, knew Wilson, and once when we were talking about the DIARIES, he laughed as he recounted the fact that she had written in one of the chap-books that he had tried again and again to make love to her! The truth was that he was desperately in love with his wife - Dorothy McCarthy - who had unhappily fallen out of love with him.

This suggested to me less of a unique talent than very adroit literary showmanship designed for a future and unknown audience. That she worked for awhile in Paris as a psychoanalyst (sans any formal training)

undoubtedly coloured her literary thinking and latter-day public appearances - as, for example, when she gave a talk at St. Clement's church in N.Y.C. a couple of years ago, she appeared in a full-flowing pure white robe, under a single muted spot-light, with the cloisters dark.She also once admitted to me, in passing, that she had to give up being a "head-shrinker" because she could not absorb and endure the pain and ugliness she listened to - and that some of the things told to her did make their way into her DIARIES, in one form or another.

THE FAMOUS HOUSEBOAT OF ANAIS NIN, THERE ON THE SEINE - LOOKING A BIT SMALLER AND MORE UNHYGENIC THAN REMEMBERED.

However, I do not wish to suggest anything derogatory by the word "showmanship". All truly creative people are showmen, whether they are aware of it or not, as this is in the natural order of the aesthetic experience. The current American connotation turns on Barnum-type promotions, but it actually means presentation with flair. Anaïs Nin has *flairè aveç schmaltz!*...and, in a very real sense, our literary experience is the richer for it, we who long ago recognized that it was language that was the highest form of *kultur u. Zeitgeist*.

While creative showmanship is frequently and erroneously confused with imagination, it differs in that it requires an high order of native talent, trained and disciplined, which imagination never does.

For those of you who have heard my references now and then to Anaïs' houseboat and the strange melange she housed there, you can now see the bloody thing amid the accompanying illustrations. Tales could be told about that houseboat, and fascinating ones at that, but I will write of that another time, in another place.

As I have implied, the so-called photographic supplement to the DIARIES is filled with second-rate photography. Like many another, Anaïs has hundreds of snapshots of herself, and of people who came and went through her life - chums and famous people, strangers and other lovers, but mostly the snapshots she kept were of herself. Stating it baldly, Anaïs Nin was not very photogenic.

And while some of those who pointed cameras at her were her lovers, it is painfully obvious that none of them were photographers. (I refer you to Volume I of my Photographic Notebooks, *The Face of Modern Photography*.) Also, of course, it has long been recognised that creative people are notorious in their slef-love. Cecil Beaton's long and synthetic love-affair with Garbo yielded hundreds of prints of Garbo, yet very few even came close to conveying the allure and the beauty of Garbo - even in the hands of someone like Beaton.

The point would be, of course, that self-love cannot be shared, communicated, projected, and if continued long enough will lead to a a form of creative self-cannibalisation. It follows that when love is real, Self is annihilated in the wonder of the object loved, and only children can be bemused for long by the wonder of themselves.

I have sometimes wondered how Beaton would have photographed Anaïs , but I recall that while I was interviewing him a few years ago and her name came up, he grimaced, and changed the subject.

It would be unsporting of me to let stand without qualification my earlier statement that Anaïs handled truth loosely. She always made much ado about writing "truthfully" and "realistically" - which she never did, so I, having been there, could spot certain references, or descriptions or actions which simply were not true in fact. In an early letter to Henry Miller she wrote:

> *"D.H.Moore came - a tall, pale young man, interesting, difficult, and I believe on a quest of discovery....I believe he is worth your interest and I hope his work on you will satisfy you..."*

Such comments are straight-forward, objective, designed to convey direct intelligence to another party about a third party. Here, by contrast, is an example of Anaïs Nin, the writer:

> *"D.H.Moore - a purity and austerity of face, black wavy*

hair which he wears in a slightly Spanish fashion. Sudden smiles - tension - romanticism. We have elabourate and intricate talks. He is too aware, too mental, but I recognize the questing, disguised in complexities. He does not take the place of Leonard, who was drugged on dreams. But I will no longer practice this insane murder of the present in which the romantic neurotic is so skilled..."

My hair was never black, and I have not the faintest idea of what wearing it in a slightly Spanish style was or is; but that is a minor non-truth. A romantic neurotic she certainly was, despite her continuous insistence, in public and in private that she was not. Some of the above we may accept as creative showmanship, as I have said - the setting of the stage, as it were, with a mundane fact in order to follow it with a neatly turned phrase - which she has done.

Photo: Stanley Mills Haggart

Photo: Brassaï, Paris

There is nothing immoral in that, obviously, but it was Anaïs' insistence upon truth and reality and integrity of her role as "image-maker" that rang false. And I have come to realise that "Anaïs Nin" was her finest image...and that it was slightly false.

Anaïs and her writings, in and of themselves, constitute a unique contribution to the aesthetical literary experience of this century,

without embellishment or management. But like all romantic neurotics she has been compelled to pick at the strands and fabric of her life and the lives of others around her and reweave them into another pattern, another design a bit closer to her heart's desire.

If Leonard (an early poet-lover) was murdered by his dreams later on in Japan, could not Anaïs have murdered an even greater literary talent under the pyrotechnics of a unique but highly restrictive *style* of literary exposition? If we ever meet again this side of the bourne, I shall ask her

For myself, the interaction of Anaïs and her writings upon my life was rich, fecund, xtending, and I am grateful to whatever gods there be for having known her...though I will admit to feeling a slight annoyance when I read in the DIARIES that I made veiled references of love to her.

But, then, according to the DIARIES, all men in her life did.

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Photo: José Alemany

THE LITTLE HALF-GODS

I drift between high buildings and hear the little half-gods whining, tearing the air with their wailing. There is a notion growing ancient in my mind - the notion is one of escape. There is a Mayan veil through which I can no longer see, and I have grown a stranger to the land of my fathers; but it has been a metamorphosis without charity, for locusts have no king.

The high winds of the last fact howl through the flimsy spider-web walls of all those worlds I built upon illusion. All life is flowing, flowing, flowing and I hang lifelessly above it. My fingers are fisted futilely; they have fought the little half-gods for a very long time, smashing their ten thousand complacent masks...no-more, no-more. Years - and no life in them. My life has been like a tree planted in a desert where no rains came. My roots have dried-up and have twisted achingly through the long lean years in an attempt to lay hold of a passing thought, an idea, a mere word plucked from reality, and made static and enduring. There is something newly born, yet perishing in me.

There is a life I have not lived. There are cities in which I have not dwelt. There are Mayan veils through which I cannot pass. My images are sinking at crazy angles into the softness of their illusory foundations. The high buildings tower over my gods and seek to feel the face of the quiet black sky. The mad city gods are snoring deliriously on their iron beds and the night is breathing softly through my veins, as though trying to implant once again the germs of this fever called living.

I walk the empty streets and find this town a city not worthy of an explanation. The soft night air slides over my eyeballs and I catch hurrying glimpses of all the twisted, splintered thoughts gathered from other eyes, an ocular rigadoon. I am bruised by a sense of seeking, I seek what isn't here, was never here. Years - and no life in them.

Tuberoses by the hundreds I have plucked, all red and pink and yellow, but it was illusion. The following night was a stranger to their perfume. The little half-gods are still whining in the streets.....

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The Coming of Lilitchka

His name was Leon - a limp-wristed type who lisped in lavender syllables, and had a penchent for sailors. He also suffered from an extreme affliction of myoptic astigmatism, forcing him to wear glasses, the lenses of which resembled the bottoms of old time glass milk-bottles. I had met him somewhere along the way in Baltimore, and promptly forgot him, so I was a bit surprised to be suddenly hailed by name in the old B&O railroad station. It was Leon. Apparently, he remembered me more easily than I remembered him.

It seemed that he and one of his current chums had gotten together to write a musical play, to direct and act in it. The play was entitled "Slice The Ham Thin" - and that is all I remember about it. It was to be given its maiden performance at the Johns Hopkins University play-house that evening. Leon insisted that I simply had to come and see the play, to witness his acting, and above all, to listen to the songs he and his chum had composed, and on and on.

I really wasn't interested, in Leon, his chums, his theatrical aspirations, but it would be nearly five hours before the train would take me back to Allentown, so I shrugged and asked: Why not?

Deliberately taking a seat at the rear of the play-house - it really could not be dignified by the title of "theatre" - I endured the play, the presumptuous music, the song-lyrics with their implicit sexual connotations - and could recall not a single line an hour later. However, I began to notice that whenever Leon was on stage, he seemed to be playing to someone down stage, and to the left. He repeatedly turned his now blind eyes (he had removed his glasses) in a fixed stare at someone.

From casual curiosity, I tried to locate the object of his attention, expecting to see a sailor or another "queer". Finally, I did spot the figure of a woman, her back towards me, dressed in black and with what used to be called "dirty blonde" hair. I could see nothing else as she didn't turn her head, or seem to move at all. When the play was over, she disappeared in the milling throng, and I smiled to myself at my momentary curiosity about an unknown woman.

I stood outside the play-house entrance, and was still there when Leon came bouncing out, full of his own magnificance, and insisting that I join him and the crowd at his home - a celebration, a "real"

party. I automatically refused, stating I had a train to catch at midnight. Whereupon Leon chortled and pointing to his watch, triumphantly announced that it was only ten o'clock, and I had plenty of time, etc. Again, I shrugged and gave in, but took a seperate taxi.

The house was fashionable enough and Leon's mother, a short, round woman with a set expression and close-bobbed dark hair, greeted the mob as it swarmed through her doorway with conventional platitudes. She had long since resigned herself to her son's queerness, and when she saw me, she stared, then exclaimed:

"What in God's name are *you* doing here?"

I assured her that God had not been consulted, that I was killing time against a train's departure. She nodded and said:

"It's probably just as well. I hear that terrible things go on at the B&O station this time of night."

The crowd milled about in the mindless manner of such crowds, the drinks flowing as freely as milk from the udders of a sick cow; and voices, predictably, grew more and more shrill and words became more and more meaningless. Now and then a couple would disappear into other parts of the house. I kept one eye on my watch, appalled by the tediousness of time passing.

I had taken a position by the French windows, out of the way and happily ignored by the crowd. Leon's mother, knowing that I did not drink, had brought me a glass of orange-juice, and I simply nursed it long, as they say somewhere. It was about half an hour later, I suppose, that I decided to move into the dining-room, primarily to get a shift in the scenery, which was becoming rather monotonous where I was.

A simple decision - a walk from one room into another: yet a move that was to be pivotal for the rest of my life, and there was no caulic presentiment.....

The coming of Lilitchka into my life was not accompanied by a fan-fare of *shofars*, rolling kettle-drums, or crashing cymbals. Rather, it was as simple as walking from one room into another and seeing her leaning against the far wall.

I realised in some caulic way that she had been the object of Leon's myoptic attention at the play-house. Her black dress was simple, in fashion, accented by a single rope of pearls around her wide throat. Her face was broad, with high cheek-bones and an interesting mouth. Her eyes were grey-green changling things, depending upon the light. She had a full whiskey glass in her hand, and seemed to be surrounded by an aura of detachment and disinterest. She was in the room but not of it.

Our eyes met as soon as I entered the room, as though she had been expecting me, and I felt a distinct psychic shock from the thought. We looked at each other for a very long time, unwaveringly, expressionless, and found in each other's eyes reflexions of a private exile.

There were no formal introductions, not even an exchange of names. I moved towards her and she moved towards me. We made comfortable small talk, during which time she never raised the glass in her hand. When I lighted her cigarette, she cupped her hands around mine, looked up at me over the flame with a sudden intensity, that faded even as I watched. Then she released my hand, turned her head, and quietly said:

"It's been a long time."

Only that, and nothing more.

And in the silence that ensued we were at ease with words unspoken and thoughts unrevealed, in tacit awe, perhaps, by the thought that we shared the gift of wonder in an unwonderous age.

At that time I was under contract to Grumman Aircraft, out of Farmingdale, Long Island. They had recently taken over the Mack Truck plant in Allentown, and our job was to design and install a production assembly-line for the empenage sexion of Grumman's torpedo-bomber for the U.S.Navy. I had come to Baltimore to visit friends, having been confounded by the social morés and tribal tabus of the Pennsylvania Dutch that I had found in Allentown (about whom I have written elsewhere)..

When I mentioned my imminent departure, she immediately offered to drive me to the station, which she did. She drove a 1936 Chevrolet coupé, and I noted that she drove competently but cautiously, despite the light vehicular traffic at that time of night. As though kenning my thought she said, without turning her head:

"It's an old car, and you shouldn't ask it to do what it can no longer do well."

I laughed quietly then and held out my hand, palm up. She immediately reached over with her free hand and closed her fingers tightly around mine. The ride to the station was made in warm silence, still holding hands. We said good-bye at the station, I boarded the train, waved and found a seat.....and I still did not know her name.

The following day I telephoned Leon and asked about the woman in black, with slavic features and grey-green eyes. Leon laughed violently in his high-pitched manner and finally said:

"This is too precious for words! My dear boy, I just got off

the 'phone with her. She called and asked me the same questions about you! Oh, this is too much! - I mean, really!"

When he had subsided he gave me her name and address, I then immediately sent a telegram to her, inviting her to come to Allentown the next week-end. Just that, and nothing else.

Upon receipt of the telegram, she did not wait for the week-end but took the next train to Allentown.....and that was how Lilitchka came into my life, altering it forever, until her untimely and unnecessary death. But the love that we were to know was the love they knew a thousand years before the Flood.....

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lee miller

LEE MILLER: The Last Bohemian?

(Lead-in Photograph of Lee Miller by Hoynigan-Huen, 1929.)

When photographers with such names as Steichen, Beaton, Horst, de Meyers, Man Ray, Genthe, Hoynigan-Huen vie with each other to produce photographs of you, your face, your figure - with and without clothes, it can easily be assumed that you are distinctive, sep rate, living, as Neitzsche phrased it, in a place apart. Lee Miller was that distinctive, and she did live in a place apart.

I never learned whether she had ever met Zelda Fitzgerald, but there were striking similarities in their forms of public exhibitions. Her swath of loves, lovers, husbands swept across Europe and the Middle East, and when I met her, her reputation was larger than life, as a "free soul", a "bold" woman. In today's vernacular, she would be referenced as an emancipated broad.

Our meeting made no distinct impression upon me. She had just left her Egyptian husband and Paris buzzed with news of her return to the scene of her first triumphs as artists' model, fashion model, correspondent for *Vogue* and *Bazaar,* fashion pirate, photographer, and on and on. She was to be guest of honour at someone's studio, and I went, feeling no anticipation. I was familiar with all the names - and in Paris in those days the name of the game was the *name!* - that were so awesomely brutted about at such gatherings - Ford, Hemingway, Stein, Breton, Cocteau, Eluard, Ernst, Miro, etc., but while I had found Ford readable,I could not stomach the unintelligible scenity of Stein, the literary sterility of Hemingway, the infantile daubings of Picasso.

The studio was crowded, humid, sweaty, nois y. Lee Miller came in surrounded by fawning men and one woman. She was a bit taller than the average woman, with long legs, blonde hair and blue eyes - which may have been her inheritance from her Hessian-Scotch forebears. Her hands were always in motion and she spoke rapidly, punching out her words at times. She also drank a great deal. That last being significant only in that awareness of alcoholism was not as wide-spread then as now, nor as institutionalised; and Lee Miller was an incipient alcoholic, as her son later testified.

She struck me as simply a rather abrasive, middle-aged woman, labelled and filed away as with Colette, Spivy, Chenel. Perhaps youth's instinctive turning away from confronting old age is based on fear - fear of growing old, fear of losing one's bright and immature conceit, fear of having one's shallow pretentions exposed.

Had I been interested in Photography at that time, I may have found the gathering more entertaining, enlightening, but I was not at ease amid the small talk of Man Ray and the solarisation technique he had invented during his three-year love-affair with Lee Miller almost a decade before. It was simply another hedonistic gathering on the Left Bank in Paris among hundreds of other such gatherings going on in Paris any odd Thursday, and sometimes on Sunday.

Actually, in retrospect, we were all unconscious attendents to a wake of a way of life that was rapidly passing - the world of Bohemia, by any definition. It had endured for nearly a century, and had altered the thrust of the *aesthetique* of the Western World. But, again in retrospect, what did it really matter? - the frenetic absurdities of art-theories, the violent and mindless and endless protestations as to meaning, and form, and feeling, far into the night, for this-or-that mode of expression or medium, technique, coloration, line and space, but most of all - *meaning!* - not to the unknown viewer, but to the artist!

Bohemia dying, by whatever name, and Lee Miller as the last high priestess. In the days before the fall of Paris there was being enacted, unknowingly, a repetition of what had happened *fin de siecle*. At the turn of the century there had been an explosive force rampaging across all forms of the aesthetic experience in Europe - art, literature, painting, sculpture, the theatre, music. Participants hailed the decade as a new beginning, the past was dead, the future was limitless with a new-found artistic freedom...a sentiment Breton tried to make the basis of his Dada movement a few years later, and pushed to an extreme by the later so-called Surrealists - with whom Lee Miller claimed full membership, if not one of the founding fathers - or daughters.

Actually, the turn of the century was witness to the decay and death of all the arty nonsense spawned during the last century. Just as a candle will suddenly flare-up in a brilliant flame just before its wick is extinguished in molten wax, the frenetic arty protestations in Paris just before Hitler's War were the brilliant flaming of a way of life about to be extinguished.

The facsimile of her signature heading this piece could suggest some rather weird and wonderful things to the current breed of "grapho-analysts", but it simply is as abnormal as the woman, herself. Larger than life, grossly affected, a lack of continuity that characterised her life, emotional immaturity are all there, as is her life.

Several years later, when I had become involved in the long-neglected historical continua of professional Photography, I wrote a hundred-odd articles, interviews, and a couple of books published anent Photography, I spent some time researching the photographic side of Arnold Genthe's life. And as I found out more-and-more, I kept coming across the name of Lee Miller.

It seems they were friends, sharing an honest affection, without the intrusion of sex. So I took a little time to find out more about the dégagé woman I had met ever so many years ago. Some of what I found out is in the preceding material. But what struck me as strange was that the more I learned of Lee Miller, the more I wished I had been a bit more mature when we had met!

Born in up-state New York, she was an incorrigible child, save to her father. Her father fancied himself something of an amateur photographer, when the appelation "amateur" did not carry a snide connotation. He was secretly obsessed all his life with shooting nude females, mostly young, chums of Lee's, as well as Lee, herself. He had even had his wife pose for him in the nude before they were married. He took hundreds of snapshots of Lee over the years, until he was reduced to living out his life in a wheel-chair. It was increasingly obvious that Lee Miller had an Electra-complex that never left her.

She was sexully assaulted by a cousin living in Brooklyn at an early age, thereby contracting a comminicable social disease, and endured painful daily applications of dichloride of mercury, usually administered by her father. Then a long period of being "treated" by those who are called today "head-shrinkers". It seems they laboured the fact that sex was not love and that her experience should not traumatise her attitude towards the traditional man-plus-woman relationship. It would seem they failed, as her subsequent lovers and love-affairs would tend to suggest. Her Electra-complex seems to have been the only constant in her relationships with men. Her faithlessness to others was but fidelity to him.

Sent down from half a dozen public and private schools, her family sent her to Europe with a chaperon, whom she quickly chucked as she became familiar with the byways of Paris. By her own admission, she "found" herself in Paris, and fitted easily into the moldy life of the Left Bank, the so-called artistic life, the cheap wine, the free-love and cock-roaches vieing with well-fed rats and silver-fish.

At the turn of the century, Bohemianism was in vogue, and the term was legitimate coinage until fairly recent times. Dada flowered briefly, then came Surrealism that emphasised as a basic tenet the idea of free-love. Lee Miller often referred to herself as a Surrealist, but one can easily get the impression that she had a private definition for

the appe llation.

Her aggressiveness, her bland self-assertiveness in her love-affairs may be explained in part in terms of her childhood trauma, but the woman, as so many of her ilk at the time, was rather less important than what her life was a representation of - a way of life that was failing, for there was no real life in it.

I've sometimes felt that an interesting book could be written about that handful of women who, in the first quarter-century, were photographed and written about and became contemporary legends as "the most beautiful woman in Europe". It appears that there were several who wore the label. I recall that while interviewing Cecil Beaton for the first time and in looking at some of his early photographs of beautiful woman, he had, with his quaint 3A Kodak, photographed Lady Diane Cooper, and he remarked in passing that she had been considered the most beautiful woman in Europe. I have heard the same said of Djuna Barnes, Maude Adams, Ellen Terry - and Lee Miller. Arnold Genthe had his own list.

Like Beaton, she entered Photography with a Rollei camera, and it is worth mentioning that her Egyptian photographs remind one immediately of Beaton's African pictures. She photographed forms in space, such as sand dunes, odd rock formations, angular details of ancient buildings, and such. She also photographed a lot of people, but they were simply snapshots of whomever happened to be in front of the camera. She referred to her Egyptian photographs as Surrealistic, which they never were, of course.

But it seems that Man Ray did not invent the solarisation technique with which he is creditted. It came into being while Lee was living with Man Ray, and she had as much to do with the final form of the technique as he. She solarised a few of her later photographs, mostly of so-called movie-stars and theatrical personalities, usually women. She did have a sense of proportion, in as much as she was very insistent that her photographs were not "pictures", in the days when there were those misguided souls trying to hold that Photography was Art. Her talent with a camera did get her into the tail-end of Hitler's War, and VOGUE and LIFE published some of her work.

As for her writings for the esoteric magazines, she approximated brilliance. In brief, she was an excellent writer. Her grasp of English and its dialect we call American-English was impressive, and one can savour her writings even at this late date, even though on many an occasion she complained of writing being sheer torture for her. One need not share her paean of praise for Picasso, for example, in order to appreciate the adroitness and elegance of her use of language.

She married Roland Penrose and subsequently bore him a son, named Anthony. She began to lose her looks after the boy was born, and

for the next 20 years there was continual strife between them. In some odd way she blamed his birth for her loss of her looks, the weight she was beginning to put on, the alcohol she consumed, her thinning hair. She underwent several face-lifts, resorted to ill-fitting wigs, originally called "transformations". She and her son made peace apparently after he married, and I understand he is in process of writing a biography of his mother. It should be a worth-while piece.

Lee Miller died of cancer complications in 1977.

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ON LYRICAL OBSCENITY:

Henry Miller

I first encountered Henry Miller through the reading of his famous/infamous *Tropic of Cancer*, a pioneering effort, so it seemed, to break the language free from its traditional rigidity of forms.

The book fitted no pattern of writing, could not be neatly categorised and labelled, nor was it capable of being described as being this or that *kind* a book. It was spoken of as vulgar, pornographic, obscene, and as having every verbal image tinged with *psychopathia sexualis*. It was probably, and still is, all of these things, but a bit more.

The so-called normal pre-occupation of ignorant youth with the remarkable difference between boys and girls was never a problem of mine, anymore than I was awed by the wetness of rain. So I was rather surprised, later on, to find that Miller was being referenced increasingly as a "pornographic writer", as that distinction had never occurred to me.

While he has put the language through compelling terpsichorean scores, I've long held that Miller's writings disturb the insecure among us chiefly because of his all-exclusive subject - Reality.

His awareness if not his knowledge of our contradictory and sterile *Zeitgeist*, bastardised honour and fantastic *morés* is precise and intimate. His writings on the vagaries of the human condition, if not the experience, reveals a sharp social perception of our infantile social shadings, and a rather acerbic disgust for such.

By his self-professed determination to stand pat on the precise social fact, Miller has violated every sacred rule and dictum so revered by our commercially oriented "writers". His anthropological accuracy reminds one of V.F.Calverton, of Baltimore; yet the fidelity of his determination allows him to deal with life in a specially effective way - effective enough to disturb the smug and complacent.

It is worth noting that no-one has yet to answer Miller - he is simply declaimed against. From the banks of the muddy Seine, and much time on Anaïs Nin's houseboat, his writings do suggest that our national literary expectancy amounts to little more than vague and familiar rhetoric and easy to repeat symbolism of hackneyed images.

It naturally follows that Miller could not eschew servile

imitation, cant, and compromise and *not* bring forth something fresh and original - a sort of seasonless Spring of the printed word. Only the willfully naive insist that his critics do not damn his books from envy. Ah, yes - *envy*, a soul-shrivelling emotion served sizzling hot from a hell of inferiority.

In choosing to write about the commotion of Life-As-It-Is, Miller chose, knowingly or unknowingly - he is not sure even now, the kinaesthetics of the cosmos. Miller has said to me:

"My aim in writing is for a greater Reality!"

Despite his German background, and his voracious appetite for reading all manner of books, Miller has not read von Weber, and was a bit taken aback when I referred him to von Weber's phrase of 100 years ago:

"Standing on the intolerable Reality, I re-create!"

To really understand Miller we must add the fact that he conceived of his literary mission in a certain way. That he has since abandoned his mission is of no moment, here or there.

In his writings he seeks to re-create those portions of our Reality that he finds intolerable. And where Reality has refused to yield, he has recorded his ideals - those space-probing shafts as guides for restless minds of the yet unborn. For it is what he has *done* by writing the way he has, rather than what he has *said*, that makes his writings important. Even he cannot blot them out now, no matter how contrary they may be running to his present diffused aims.

Miller, prior to 1935, was not a return to primitiveness, a fancier of the bizarre and erotic, an anarchist in the back-alleys of reason, a wild-eyed vindicator of *Das Obermann*, or even a devotee of Dadaism. He was all these things and, at the same time, opposite.

If primitivism means dreaming of other human relations than those buried under the dross of current literary conventions - strictly enforced by gum-chewing stenographers, frustrated old-maids, and failed journalism majors acting as "Initial Readers" in our publishing houses - then we might say Miller is a primitive. The notion is not new, surely - it flows from some fine old stock down through the ages, probably having been given its original impetus by the Scribe Ana during the reign of Thothemus III. Certainly, Ana's *Lament Of A Man Weary With This Life* was not a configuration on his chances of moving into the Heaven of Paul.

Furthermore, even the most casual reading of Verlaine, Baudelaire, Ducasse, Gautier, Rimbaud, *et al.*, is enough to convince anyone

that Miller was not the first to point out a rather desperate need to rechart Reality. His new direction was not the result of living in a poor sexion of Paris under marginal conditions, but the result of keen observation and reasoning. It represented - and, divorced from the man, still represents - a new and highly effective method of fulfilling the ineffable needs of the genuine artist.

When we realise that all writers are synthesizers of Reality, makers of discourse, and the degree of their success is directly proportioanl to their success of communicating, then we can the better appreciate the cosmology of Miller's new direction.

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The man, himself, is short and fairly stocky, a bullet-shaped head peculiar to a certain stratum of Germans, a wide mouth, large ears, and myoptic eyes. His fingers are short and stubby, stained from his adiction to those atrocious French cigarettes. At any given moment, he is the echo of the last book he has read, and as I have stated, Miller is a voracious reader. He compiles long lists of words he encounters that are new to him, and the next day spends long hours in the library, seeking their meaning. He will then fill a sheet with sentences employing those words, until he feels he can use them without appearing affected.

He is also a great talker, as they say, under certain conditions, although I've never really been able to anticipate those conditions prior to his reading this-or-that book. Money and food were always at a premium, there on Anaïs' houseboat, and two instances of moment may be recalled here. Anaïs, for some unfathomable reason, would not permit anyone to commence eating breakfast, for example, before Miller was at table. Usually, he came in, sat down, and we ate - if food was available.

However, if Miller, still afire with the book he had read last night, started talking before he sat down, everyone waited. Miller at such moments was a superb talker. He would produce awesome oral pyrotechnics and without repeating himself. Unhappily, he could, and did, talk for a couple of hours at such times, and true to the rule of the house (or, houseboat), no-one started to eat until he was finished. There were times when he simply never finished.....

The other instance one recalls in askance. The houseboat was little more than a barge-hull, over which had been constructed a deck-long super-structure, resembling nothing quite so much as a low-roofed barn. A small part of the interior had been partitioned, in which Anaïs and Ian lived. The rest of the "barn" was set-off in cubicles by hanging a blanket between each. Miller slept in one; next to him was Michael Fraenkel - a Belgian poet who promoted money now and then to publish slender volumes in Brussels, with such titles as *Death Of A Poet, Death In A Room, Death Is Not Enough.*

He can best be described as small, wiry, nervous, middle-aged, and sporting a ferocious black beard. He was the traditional intellectual of the group, something of a (European) political ideologue, and deeply read in the King James' version of the Bible. He and Miller would have hour-long discussions on most anything, usually trivia.

They decided to create a modern Hamlet by writing long letters to each other every day, and then spending their nights in replying to the other. During the day, they did not speak to each other. This went on for weeks, and their compilations grew to rather impressive numbers. The subject-matter of their bizarre collaboration was anything and everything which they felt bore upon what Poe called this fever called living. Their labours were subsequently published (in Mexico as a pirated work) under the title of, naturally, *Hamlet*. *One copy that I know of was sold in New York for $50!!*

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Today, Henry Miller basks in the California sunshine at Big Sur, living in a disreputable shack with a one-time protegé of Sherwood Anderson and her off-spring. Writing still, to be sure, and occasionally running down to that deer-park we call L.A. for a lionizing soiree, but how poor is his best.

On his return from Paris he toured the country and produced a book entitled *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, a splendid title, but its spleen sounded vaguely archaic, of another time, another place. It was not relateable any longer. Books have been written about him, good and indifferent, and may continue to be written - even his abounding sympathy for the ephemeral dialect of the day does not detract from the significance of what he has done for a whole generation of writers.

But while he refused to stretch himself thin over 5,000 years of culture and knowledge of the Western World, he cannot expect his original introspections to outlast this generation. The world and his wife have rushed on to more common things. But future literary historians will always record his name as a writer who had sufficient talent to make a new direction fecund and impressive.

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TOWARDS
A
PHOTOGRAPHIC
AESTHETIQUE

When you're on your way to becoming a great photographer, always remember to look out for yourself.....you may be getting in your own way.

This is most likely to occur if you permit yourself to become bemused and thereby immobilised by the meaningless proposition that Photography is, somehow, Art; in the sense that we use the word to connote manifestations of mankind's aesthetic experience.

Excluding my own writings, since from before the turn of the century there have been but four works by Americans which addressed the issue of critical photographic literature in order to define disciplinary criteria for adjudging the aesthetic, or value-of-beauty merits of a photograph, irrespective of its subject-matter.

Which is not to say that our photo-media of all stripes haven't flirted with the theme since 1900 - they have, but without exception, all efforts have been faulty and sophomoric re-hashes or gross misrepresentations of arty ideas propounded from before 1900, chiefly by Robinson. Again with no exceptions, all have been obsessed with pressing traditional criteria and even the esoteric vocabulary of Art into their service. The result has been, of course, simply a compounding of confusion.

It is too easily demonstrated that Photography and Art have but little in common, save in making direct visual appeal to unknown viewers' aesthetic apparatus, to one degree or another. Thus we may dismiss any further consideration of Art. We are then left with a question:

Is there an authentic photographic aesthetique?

I easily admit to holding most adamantly to the view, there

in the early days of my seeking after the true face of Photography, that there was not. Now, 20 years later, I admit just as easily to the opposite view. I now contend, and am prepared to defend right royally, that Photography does have an *aesthetique* as distinct unto itself as that which Faure's five volumes established for Art; but without borrowing from Art's aesthetical trappings, save in what we may term the *fundaments of every-man's inherent response to what we term Beauty*.

NATURE IS ART AT A DISADVANTAGE:

When I turned that phrase at the age of 18, starving for Art on a house-boat in Paris, I did not realise that I had written an awesome truth, as well as an epigram worth repeating.

The realisation came years later, and the realisation permitted a lot of the philosophical furniture of my mind to be re-arranged into a more orderly and satisfying pattern. A larger sense of aesthetic order and creative discipline also resulted, but one notion that did not fall into another place was the stupid and ongoing controversy of Art vs. Photography vs. Craft.

It has been my observation, while perigrinating among the great and near-great photographers of the day that the subject of photographic aesthetics cannot be mentioned with impunity - *i.e.*, sanely, rationally, unemotionally, or even intelligently. This baffled me for a very long time, as I've always believed that logic and reason would always triumph over emotional convixions held in absence of the fact.

I have raised the question to literally huncreds of photographers wherever I've travelled, men of all grades of ability and persuasion. Not once did I receive a comprehensible reply. Some were more articulate than others, naturally, but none were definitive. While Cecil Beaton did not propound a photographic *aesthetique* during our interview, he did make a positive statement of his own view when he stated that Photography definitely was not Art.

Apparently, the word "Art" is capable of jamming the normal methodological network of men's ability to think dispassionately about something they feel but cannot articulate with words. It is more than a matter of semantics, I feel, and its root-cause seems to lie in every-man's concept of aesthetics. We all speak of Art, craft, beauty, creative, as though we all knew precisely what we were talking about. These are distinct terms, but while they have in common attributative nuances of Art, just what do they mean, really, when used by modern photographers?

No-one I have spoken with about this could explain himself without resorting to the traditional vocabulary and syntax of what we have traditionally referred to as Art. This is not to their discredit, but it does tend to point-up just how paucitic is legitimate critical

literature on Photography, *per se*.

As I have written elsewhere, you cannot hope to have an individual conception of what it means to be a professional photographer unless and until you learn where you've been - *e.g.*, the history of Photography's philosophical precedents, the kinds of precedents which establish an ongoing validity and authority of a truly professional discipline.

While reasonable discussion like intelligent conversation, is a lost art today, it remains an incontrovertible fact that the language of any given calling rmeains its highest mode of communication. And yet, in any late-night session among photographers of any stripe, you will always hear such words as beauty, art, craft, aesthetics, creative, again and again. But what, precisely, does anyone mean to convey with such words? - to you, to me, to the speaker?

Like the original axiom of learning where you've been in order to know where you are, it is equally necessary that the words YOU use when addressing yourself to Photography are understood equally by everyone, including yourself, as meaning precisely the same thing at all times. Professional literacy cannot be acheived any other way.

Is Photography reckonable as Art? - is it a special kind of craft? - is it a mere mechanical skill that makes allows everyman to actually believe that he, too, can be a photographer simply by filling-in a coupon and posting six empty beer-cans?

At the risk of paining delicate egos to whom such questions are mystical and personal, let me say that they are all utterly inconsequential. Until all photographic workers use the same vocabulary and the same precision in syntax to communicate the same effective intelligence anent Photography, the current irrational confusion will continue. And before you can talk about the ramifications of Photography vs. Art, Photography vs. Craft, Photography as a Beauty Adjunct, you must first know what is universally and historically connotated by these terms.

"TO WALK IN BEAUTY LIKE THE NIGHT":

Your first awareness of "beauty" was probably the Wordsworthian one - the beauty of nature. And you can still find in nature situations you would apply the word to - to codify your reactions - sunsets, vistas, flowers. This connotation of beauty we all learn early on, and in time our subconscious conclusion is that beauty is the quality of something *external* to us.

In our frame of reference this is really an untenable connotation, were it to be analyzed - but no-one ever does! One simply becomes emotional and defensive about the whole question. Beauty exists in nature in the mind that is *prepared to apprehend it!*

Nature is not beautiful simply because she pleases man's eye, but *because she pleases man's eye in a particular fashion!*

It follows, then, that YOU are an integral part of any equation of Beauty.

A doe in a forest may be pleased by the sight and scent of lush foliage that will appease her hunger, but does a doe find such a scene "beautiful"? Since man has not created the physical beauty of lakes and mountains, for example, it follows that beauty is a bit more than a quality we apply to things external to us. And that leads us to the obvious conclusion that Art is a *human* manifestation - Art, not Beauty.

All Art is manifested in things; things are fashioned of many physical materials - wood, stone, clay, words, oil, sounds - even dance-movements, I suppose, although I easily admit that the vagaries of The Dance are a form of human activity I've never comprehended. Maholy-Nagy went farther, of course, when he insisted that it was the materials of Art which were the repositories of beauty, but, then. he was a nut...

We speak of beauty of thought, of mental images conjured by words, but are not our thoughts and images comprised of physical connotations of things external to us? It would then appear as reasonable to say that Art is the *construction* of a material work. This also tends to suggest - what? - simply, that instead of being something remote and precious and esoteric, Art in any manifestation is simply an *artifice* of man.

Nor is man unique because of this: birds build nests, beavers build dams, *bulbuls* sing certain kinds of songs in Pershian twilight - all reflecting an ancestral instinct to construct, to produce something that was not there before. While such instinct lead to practical ends for such creatures, but this instinct to construct is the foundation of man's *impulse towards beauty* - the basis of *aesthetique*.

But none of the practical ends mentioned would qualify their end-product as Art, or what we may mean by craft. Craft differs from an instinct to manipulate, to construct, in that the end-product is purposed, not merely attained. In consequence, thoughts, devices, techniques go into defining craft. Craft, in other words, is not spontaneous construction - or "creation", to use a more popular albeit nonsense word. Yet it can be demonstrated that at any point of construction, craft is approaching Art.

OF CRAFTSMANSHIP:

However, the craftsman - or photographer, in our frame of reference - is not an artist. He becomes an artist in so far as he is also able to treat his materials for themselves. This, I have found, is the

most difficult concept for modern photographers to comprehend, to grasp and synthesize into their unconscious methodology. Photographers of an earlier age had no difficulty in comprehending this concept, as evinced by the photographic elegance of their produce.

From the use of materials and the application of skills, the photographer progresses to a product that reflects the adroitness of that use, to a super-imposition of his taste, from taste to c harm, and from charm to a comprehensible (communicable) beauty.

Obviously the photographer must possess a high sense of craft - which must not be confused with mere technique. It is also possible that any defect in his craftsmanship may be atoned for by an excellence of creative treatment of his materials. However, the work would lose something in artistic rank. I have also seen works by contemporary photographers which failed of greatness because the photographer's talent - mistakenly called creativity - was inferior to his craftsmanship.

What we deem "fine-art" is really not Art at all, but superb craftsmanship. In itself, craftsmanship can also be precious and good, and is attained only by much study and practice and dedication. It is also exercised only with much pain and devotion...and if that observation tends to eliminate 80% of our photographers today, so be it.

FROM CRAFT TO ART:

Art grows out of craft - and goes beyond it.

When does this distinction occur? - when the photographer views his materials for their own sake and grows contemplative towards them. Then, the practicality of the materials becomes theoretical, but still contains another *practical* issue - *i.e.*,the naming and relating of the materials - chemicals, emulsions, lenses, papers, semsitometric functions, geometric optics, etc. But the art of professional Photography goes beyond this practical contemplation and clothes the theoretical with magic.

The behaviour of the craftsman and the photographer are the same in ordinary cognition of a thing, with this difference: the photographer uses his materials b oth contemplatively and theoretically. This results in the photographer using his materials with a practical purpose in mind - a photograph - as in craft, and it is craft that underlies any art-manifestation if it is to be comprehended by everyman.

Homo additus naturae - an ancient Latin phrase that seems applicable here. It translates as: "The addition of man to nature". The photographers adds something of his Self to his materials. He introduces them into forms and constructions and values not inherently theirs. He adds his own perceptions, which are the data of sense peculiar to him,

which add personal imputations to his materials. This may be called the fifth-dimensional aspect of a fine photograph.

And now, let us approach the nub of truth in this matter.

In virtue of adding Self to his work the photographer's produce, to be what it was meant to be - and do - demands the visual presence of his mind in its creation. Without this visual presence, no photograph has any meaning or significance, communicable feeling, or claim to an association with any *aesthetique*. This is the fifth-dimensional aspect of a Photograph mentioned above. To iterate: the true photographer imparts to his materials a meaning from Self, a meaning not indigenous to those materials. This, then, tends to detach the materials from their natural being or function, and results in becoming something else - a photograph.

Meanings we all give to objects of sense have no such connotation. That is, a lens, camera, roll of film are sensible objects; we perceive them through several senses, but they require nothing of Self for their perception. They remain fixed upon the sensorial apparatus of our minds as lens, camera, roll of film. They cannot be transmuted in and of themselves, in other words. The true photographer, however, imputes meaning derived from Self with these sensible objects. This imputation lifts both object and final meaning of his labours onto a level of intrinsic contemplation that is communicable!

This, then, is true creation, transfiguration occurs. And because the end-product of the true photographer's labours - a photograph - is communicable all by itself, can become representative of beauty.

We now have a working definition of beauty for Photography - the end-result of the impulse to construct when that impulse has become contemplative in terms of the materials used to produce that end-product.

AESTHETIC APPRECIATION vs. AESTHETIC PRODUCTION:

Human speech is creative, and that is a fact that has been historically demonstrated. There is even a modern *clique* which holds liguistics and aesthetics as unity. That may strike some as a startling proposition (which it is), due chiefly to our growing institutionalised indifference to the beauty of language, on the one hand; and the organised teaching of vernacular and secular speech as being "language". There is a difference, however, between linguistics vs. aesthetics; if we think of human speech as a construction of sounds for a practical purpose. We may find a specious collary in the photographs we produce for medicine, industry, or science.

But do such photographs fit an *aesthetique?*

Yes and no, depending upon your immediate frame of reference

when viewing a photograph. An electronics-engineer, seeing a crisply printed, brightly demarcated printed-circuit board to be used to illustrate a theory of operation he is writing, could easily be guilty of thinking the photographs was aest tically satisfying. But his frame of reference would be practical, limited, like that of the craftsman. There would be no sense of wonder, a common human communicability, and without a sense of wonder there is no magic or soul in beauty.

How does a photograph get diverted from the practicality of its materials and become enchanted? - how does the magic conjurate?

It happens when the image is apprehended by an unknown viewer theoretically, instead of being apprehended through custom or habit or by conditioned responses. Theoretical apprehension is possible when the conventional response is diverted into another *personally relateable* response that is universal, while remaining purely private.

The ultimate expression of Photography's *aesthetique* is, of course, when the photograph, itself, becomes its own end; in which case the initial response of the unknown viewer becomes also an end unto itself. I have seen a few such photographs in my time, not many, but a few. I think, for example, of the works of Plicka, Davis, Ponting, Demachy.

I would suggest that it is man's inherent aesthetical appreciation, highly or lowly developed, that attaches materials of craft to the photographer, and in the process become detached from their practical issue. The aesthetic production - the photograph - stimulates further asethetical appreciation by now including the unknown viewer; thus a *continua* of Photography's *aesthetique*.

While much cant is abroad in the land these days about self-proclaimed photographers talking wordily about self-expression and creativity and free-forms (all of which has been said for 100 years), it remains incontrovertible that it is subject-matter existing *external to* the true photographer that first excites him. He then seeks to express his aesthetical appreciation by means of the materials of Photography in such a way as to *satisfy the subject!*

Please think about that for a moment, for I feel it is a long forgotten professional photographic truth. To satisfy the subject - not the petty ego of second-rate photographers hiding their incompetence behind claims of self-expression and personal creativity. The photographer's aesthetical appreciation of the subject before his camera is expressed when he seeks to portray in a universally communicable image that subject. The second (not the first, so popular among our amateurs and their media-managers) consideration of the photographer is to satisfy his Self.

These statements conceal no mystery nor imply a miracle. They

may perhaps be better understood by this: we have all viewed portraits by Karsh and the Yosemite scene of Adams. We can recognize the work of either from across a room, without having to cross the room to verify the name of the photographer. Respectfully, I would suggest that the works of neither suggest aesthetical productions. Why? - because, rather than blend Self with the materials of Photography, the materials were used, in and of themselves, to *visually dramatise a photographic Style!!*

Style, then, that is mechanically reflective of the materials which permitted it, becomes blatantly sterile, immediately recognizable as a style, and static. The very concept of a photographic *aesthetique* precludes such an aspect in a photograph.

Stated another way: the materials of Photography in the hands of Karsh and Adams have never moved from the practical to the contemplative If you respond in a certain way to the works of either, you will always respond in exactly the same way in each future instance that you see more examples of their work. The rocks of Yosemite are dead objects: even Adams, adroit as he is, has never been able to impart *a communicable photographic life to them!* Thus, you will always find yourself responding to an appreciation of the *craftsman* Adams than to the photographer Adams. The same holds true for Karsh, and others.

PERCEPTION AS IDEAL SUPPLEMENTATION:

Ordinary perc eption is a human function brought about half from the subject perceived and half in the mind of the beholder. Photography could not exist without this human faculty of percpetion. When viewing a photograph, the viewer synthesizes what he sees as a recognizable object with something of Self. A conation, in other words.

This conation starts in the mind in virtue of the viewer's past experiences, and is quite unconscious. The viewer's Self complicates the process by interior enlargement from those past experiences peculiar to him. This is a supplementation in the form of imaginative response.

The photograph forms a part of a whole perceived image because the conation evoked in the viewer's mind is linked with conations evoked by the subject-matter of the photograph. This is a simple process of imputation, and an evocative imputation characteristic of the authentic photograph. Without an unknown viewer's ability to impute to a photograph conations of Self experiences, a photograph would be unintelligible.This is a necessary constituent of the artistic reality and validity of any authentic photograph.

The creative impulse is a special instinct inherent in all men, but of a low order in most. Those in whom it is of an high order, we tend to call artists, be they painters, composers, poets, writers.... or even photographers.

The psychological conditions attendant upon apprehension have not altered a millimeter - nor have they been disproved in this age of the instant put-down - since Kant first ennunciated that the judgement of Beauty arises in repsect of an object when the concept of it is a function of the understanding working in harmony with the imagination, which it sets going. Stated another way: a blending of sensorial data projected from a photograph, and the elements which are imputed to it by the mind and the imagination of the viewer.

This business of apprehension by unknown viewers is rather critical to any serious discussion of a photographic *aesthetique*; yet very little critically authoritative literature has appeared throughout the history of Photography on the subject. Burke, writing within the social *mores* and tribal *tabus* of a gentler age, considered the apprehension of beauty to be an instinct aroused by an object that appealled to our tenderness. There remains a certain validity in the concept, yet from apprehending the beauty of nature, of which we are all capable, to apprehending the beauty in Photography is no easy read. We cannot understand from our apprehending the beauty of nature how we come to treat materials in such a way as to produce an object of beauty, which may evoke the same feeling of appreciation we feel in nature.

It may be said, I feel, that what we deem beautiful evokes understanding and imagination simultaneously, irrespective of its form - - painting, music, gardens, sculpture - or a photograph. The appreciation of beauty by the viewer is to repeat the creation of it. Or, as Croce observed, viewing an object of beauty throws the viewer back into the frame-work of mental references out of which the artist produced it. So we are back to a prior contention - there is no difference in *kind* between aesthetical production and aesthetical appreciation: one is a pale shadow of the other and they are Siamese-twins.

I began by talking about beauty in nature which we all respond to. If the recognition of beauty in nature is, in the end, artistic in character, we may more easily see how it differs from the aesthetical photographic experience. We have no hand in creating the vistas,mountains, sunsets that we instinctively respond to. The professional photographer, on the other hand, manipulates Photography's materials from an interior, contemplative point-of-view. The resulting photograph then becomes the vehicle he has MADE, not created, to silently carry his aesthetical purpose to the eye and mind of an unknown viewer.

Making implies an higher order of skill than practice, as practice terminates in its object. Making produces another object, and the making of an authentic photograph obviously goes far beyond mere technical brilliance, such as that demonstrated by Karsh and Adams. Anyone can trip a camera shutter and produce something on film, but the true photographer, through his contemplative use of Photography's materials, produces photographs which are silvered shadows of a kind of beauty that

everyman will instinctively respond to, knowing nothing of Photography at all, or even the photographer.

Primarily, then, photographic beauty is the constructive impulse diverted from the practical to the contemplative, in a mode and a manner that is immediately communicable to everyman inherent aesthetical sense of beauty.

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NOTE

The original version of this lecture appeared in Vol. I of THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NOTEBOOKS of D.H.MOORE, and is a solidification of philosophical photographic thoughts first expressed in Vol. I of the series.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Since all Art is derivative, it follows that during the mandatory apprenticeship, self-imposed or formalised, endured by the aspiring writer, produce of that period will always reflect the major influences of writers with whom the aspiring writer held empathy. The younger one is in self-realisation, the more obvious the influence .

My association with Henry Miller and the Paris Crowd occurred early on in my maturation, and the item that follows is reflective of that association. The pseudo-pornographic writings of Miller exerted an almost savage influence upon many a young writer, and usually from a fallacious point of view. His influence was rather in excess of his literary authority as a writer. What he tried to do, what was sensed by others as what was his intent, was an undisciplined attempt to free language of conventional literary restraints, and express or project verbal imagery of a subterranean social reality.

His influence should not be under-estimated, nor, for that matter, over-rated. He was a phenomenon, real enough in the context of his time and place. Contrary to the belief still held by many an otherwise intelligent person, Miller was not a "vulgar" writer. What he did was to vulgarise the language by using non-literary themes and common-place subjects. The man, himself, on the other hand, was indeed a vulgar man. Michael Frankel, who occupied the cubicle next to his on Anaïs Nin's houseboat, was a much more literate and literary writer.

The following item, then, represents a phase one had to go through, outgrow, reject, and should be read in that light.

* * *

America, escape, a sort of nude joy.

But then, too, there was something about the people that was forever elusive, a sort of perpetual futile excitement that remained forever unjustified.

New York is an ugly island of howling emptiness and human impoverishment. The very nexus of life, seemingly, yet utterly effete, sterile, used up. The horrible vacuity one saw on the faces of men and women, ignited by some inner nothingness, talking with words about words, never about things or ideas - smoke-writing for the watchers in eternity...nothing.

They had a bovine-like respect for those they called famous people, but fame, their kind of commercialised fame, was a scarred and leprous cripple hobbling by in the shadows of ugly sky-scrapers - a cancerous hunk of lifelessness, drained dry of life by their great black god - materialism.

Pigeons flying upside—down forever.

New York is a lifetime slammed into the confines of seconds. It is not an assemblage of houses and buildings and metered electricity and classes of people - it is a whore-city.

It is the queen of the whores of Babylon. A fat and sprawling whore writhing under delirium-spawned perspiration, with rolling thighs twisting down Hester Steet to the Bowery and down Tenth Avenue to the Washington market. A vagina huge and swollen and sweaty lying athwart Greenwich Village; sexed beyond sensation, furious with unnamable desires, buldging breasts jutting up on each side of Central Park; fornicating the whole country, lips moaning in Harlem and cerebral tissues long since dissolved into a paroxysmal lifeless liquid.

Disorder. Violence. Hatred. Deformities and monstrosities of the human potential; biological sports, mired in their own dung, sticky and stinking with it.

New York is a skeleton dancing in the wind, its bones slimmed by its own excrement.

New York is a madly grinning skull peering sightlessly into the abyss of the moon no man has ever seen.

New York is an ancient whore dying amid myths and legends and words that convey no meaning.

New York is a mad carnival of dead-white maggots orchestrated by naive notions about sex, underscored by such naive notions, obligatoed by sex, and melodied by sex. The diaspora of mankind wrapt in cellophane; chrome-plated seraglios churning up oceans of barren lust; the wide and sweaty navels of women strung with cat-gut and played like a zither.

Talk of the warm gashes between women's legs, the sly and slightly hysterical whisperings of soft-fleshed women; all "art" idolising Woman with legs parted, lips half-open, eyes averted. Sex insatiate, a constant sighing allusion of penis to vagina; breathless passion throbbing in throats made red and raw with rust.

The whole damned island is a slimy and stinking emmision of some monstrous creature that had been born with a hundred different sexual apparatae, and all its days and nights were spent in self-abuse.

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EARLY APHORISMS (1)

To the historical notion that in each of us there is a man, a woman, and a child, we might add that the child is a perpetual orphan.

When we say things are changing, we are uttering a contradiction.

No social problem has ever been solved by dogma, rules, formulae, or, contrary to popular belief, by money.

Awareness + Articulation = Expression = Communication.

All civilisations begin where one grain of seed can multiply itself at least five times.

One may become too critical of moral ambiguities and over-do one's concern for ethical rectitude. This is cerebral ratiocination.

There is a wealth of universal human relevance contained in the mere existence of the exceptional man.

German idealism was poetic, and remains the only Western idealism based exclusively upon a synthetic philosophy not German.

The exceptional man must be daily prepared to be misunderstood, misjudged, criticised anew, and daily return to the dross of little minds fed from gritty little souls. He must be prepared to always be an eternal tourist in a world of synthetic shadows.

One's supreme ambition must always be to understand the reality behind appearances, to learn early on that mirrors have no image of their own, and that the image is not you.

One must sometimes stop living in order to become aware of life.

In every generation whenever anyone disturbed already existing knowledge by expanding it, or casually destroyed popular ikons with sanity and humour, he was always classified by everyman as "enemy". In consequence, the contributions of the select man have had to await unborn generations for their legitimate appreciation.

Unless one really cares about language, the current media-manufactured misunderstandings, alienations, social estrangements can only deepen our growing inability to think and speak and write.

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EARLY APHORISMS (2)

The fashion of the moment may be summed up in a single expression: mindless repudiation. Today, it is fashionable to repudiate religion, philosophy, history, culture, aesthetic values - every hard-won social victory we have won over centuries. This manufactured repudiation, for dollars, not for glory, is, as Robespierre once remarked, worse than a crime - it is a mistake.

If Hesse, whose works are classics, is considered passé today by all German students, what are they positing in his place? One cannot believe that they would suggest, say, Günter Grass' DOG YEARS.....

One must rebel in order to survive. Unhappily, this is the age in which the unwashed, the unlettered have been discovered as political expedients, and rebellion for them is totally negative. They are incapable of comprehending that rebellion is also a protest <u>for</u> something.

The current mystique of technology demands that all human relationships must be pre-digested, pre-programmed, and pre-natal.

Self-awareness turns on language. The current organised effort to denigrate language, even this dialect of English we call American, can only be viewed as a deliberate impediment to communication between individuals, let alone nations; an impediment thrown up by faceless and cynical financial interests, seeking to reduce the total human experience to that cypher the Arabic nation invented to signify nothingness.....zero.

The personal liberties won by the cosmopolitan élite of Russia, from Peter III to Catherine II, were used exclusively to solidify economic and social priviliges, not political rights. The hysterical protestations of our mindless masses for this-or-that spurious cause in the name of some specious 'political right', in the final analysis becomes a demand for unearned economic priviliges.

The need to return to sources, to the historical environment of the exceptional man cannot be gainsaid. Social and intellectual antecedents will always influence his rôle, but his particular response to them has its roots in another time, another place. It is in seeking this connexion that gives us access to the richness and the precision of thought that cannot be found in mere intellectual movements or political ideologies, in attitudes or values held by groups, the masses, the mob.

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EARLY APHORISMS (3)

Without naiveté, there can be no sense of wonder.

It is difficult to love exceptional men, and heroes are not prone to like other heroes of their own time.

Logic, grammar, geometry - these are the hand-maidens of Reason.

The function of Art is to transform the co-existent in space into the consecutive in time.

This is an age of specious causes and self-proclaimed "rights", in which equitable opportunity has given way to economic equality.

Awareness can occur early on; comprehension comes later; understanding comes in retrospection - and usually too late.

A man can be happy with any woman as long as he doesn't love her.

Social corruption and literary corruption tend to go together. Historically, this is easily demonstrable.

Without metaphors it is impossible to explain a single thought.

Technically, decadence is only such in relation to classicism.

Architecture is the key to all Art.

Everything is rendered absurd when their meaning is exhausted in their function. When the essence of anything does not reach into the moment beyond the immediate one, it is rendered immediately absurd.

Every man of genius is a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, quite unlike other men; seeing everything as it were at a different angle, mirroring the world in his mind which elogates or abbreviates all who approach them

Great fixed ideas are apt to isolate their victims, sterilizing the heart while fertilising the mind.

A foreign place is "foreign" only to the extent of your ignorance of the language spoken there. Otherwise, all places are the same.

The exceptional man should not live beyond his hour of glory, as his mortality is at risk forever thereafter.

EARLY APHORISMS (4)

Modesty is a virtue that belongs exclusively to lizards and youth.

Great literature is the direct result of impoverished lives.

The concept of human happiness depending upon merc madness is the gimmick modern man uses in a desperate attempt to rape Reality.

"Dieux joyeaux, je vous hais; Jesu n'a jamaisin."
(Joyous gods, I hate you - Jesus never laughed!)

A woman will instinctively clasp something to her, to hide it from another's view: a man will move it sideways, away from him, to put it out of sight.

Love is so simple-minded, and so charmingly selfish! Crimes of so-called passion are only the effect of a strong self-love that has been wounded.

Without visual memories upon which to draw is like writing a check against a non-existent bank-account.

Architecture, by its very nature, can never be abstract, Elements of architecture may be abstract. The moduli of classic forms, or those developed by modern man, are the results of sophisticated intellects. Pure abstraction in any art-form, and architecture is an art-form, is an intellectual ultimate.

Comprehensive art is never non-abstract, as it must begin with man, his shape, size, movement, likes, dislikes, habits, traditions of culture, sensitivity of nature, and general orneriness. Man plus nature are the building-blocks toward the understanding of what are the under-pinnings of comprehensive art.

The young take so much for granted: the old know. And gallantly they write this for a fact, that for a falsehood. But day by day they live and learn, and once-simple questions become quadratic.

The last act of marriage is always played to an empty bed.

American women always have a fear of being trapt by their own machinations, of being backed into an emotional *culs de sac*.

EARLY APHORISMS (5)

Be not virtuous beyond your own powers, and seek nothing from yourself opposed to probability.

The first lover of a girl at 17 is the one who shapes her destiny.

Henry Miller will someday be explained - indeed, the whole Paris Crowd will be so explained - in the same language-imagery as we now employ for wood-burning stoves, kerosene lamps and out-houses.

You can't tell a woman's feelings by her attitude; or her character by her appearance.

It is easy to have a unified attitude in a unified world, but when the moral world is broken into fragments, one's emotional integrity is shattered also.

Middle-class economy is sordid, for it is economy for its own sake.

When we speak of the love of a child we are deceived by the word "child". In reality, nothing is less childless. It is the love of adults that is very often childish, or influenced by a number of elements which are foreign to love, itself. The child has an individuality of its own, but it is quite without any social personality; thus, passionate love exists in the child in a pure state, and nothing is of any account but its immediate object.

When joy is daily bread, grief becomes a luxury.

Observation: American travellers think they are acting as men-of-the-world when the order bus-boys and waiters about in foreign places.

No one has the right to judge another man before he is in a position to work out his own idea.

Sympathy is usually a mild and subconscious form of contempt.

Night falls each dawn - and stays a week or two.....

A lonely man has no defense against himself; his loneliness will dictate many a gesture.

Each man must do the thing he must, and in his own way. Sometime he must go where he is needed, even though he may not be wanted.

EARLY APHORISMS (6)

So-called modern art is a cross between sickly exhibitionism and the sign-writing of the Aztecs.

Men of genius are nearly always play-actors in matters autobiographic.

Everyman thinks he has a destiny, when what he actually has is six feet of newly turned earth.

The mark of the mature mind is the ability to live with uncertainty.

Unity and harmony are lost in an aggregation of details.

By candle-light, all women are fair.

There is no such thing as "natural Art". Art, in itself, can never be natural. It is inspired by nature, but it exists only in so far as it does better than nature. To become Art, nature must be recast in the mould of a human concept. Steam is a "natural" force, but the train conceived by man is not a natural fact. It is a thing not in nature, and superior to that which can be realised by nature if left to itself.

To be a leader of men, one must first turn one's back on them.

Art today has become a meaningless means of self-justification *before* the fact, a vapid trivialisation of superficial subjects, adolescent sensations, bereft completely from any sense of wonder.

We can never know Truth, because we do not know the nature of Truth; we can never know Reality because we do not know the nature of Reality. What we term Truth can frequently falsify Reality.

Uncontrolled emotion is a kind of moral small-pox.

"Style is the man!" was first uttered by the Frenchman Buffon (1707-1788) from his speech *"Discourse On Style"*, presented before the French Academy in 1753. (A literary aside.)

One should never play leap-frog with a Unicorn!

Even the Unicorns of Springtime will eventually descend to the Plain of Châlóns.

AN IRISH CREDO
(1939)

I believe in the destiny of Ireland because there has flamed imperishable and undimmed in the breasts of oppressed Irishmen for 700 years the ideal of man's inherent right to freedom and the equality of man under God. I further believe that were this ideal morally wrong, or its justice for a moment in doubt, the Irish people would have long since vanished from the ken of the earth.

I believe in the destiny of Ireland if for no other reason than that she has given to all mankind the most painful and courageous, the most sorrowful and glorious testament that the rule of a people by another people can never be freedom, nor can it be right.

I believe in Irish dreams because they have been great dreams; and through history's twisting corridors there crashes still the dreams and deeds of Brian Kincora, O'Neill and S rsfield, of Wolfe-Tone, Emmet and Davis, of Mitchell, Connolly and Pearse - that men who love freedom remember in the time of their despair, finding new strength in the memory of Irishmen dead.

I believe in Irish freedom because it is an unreserved thing, for all men, in all climes, and of all faiths; and because it has never required for its justification or continuation, hatred of another people or the coveting of another people's land. It i thus established before any tribunal and beyond any shadow of a doubt the inherent justice and righteousness of Ireland's ancient aims.

I believe in a unified Ireland as the only possible state wherein Irishmen can enjoy true liberty. We should remember that the moral losses resulting from short-term material gains for a few, can never be regained in a state of synthetic independence.

I believe, therefore, in the ultimate good of the Irish endeavours and in the inherent greatness of a united Ireland; and soon I hope to see, foremost among all countries and in the eyes of God, the IRISH NATION!

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"UP THE REBELS!"

While this has become an age of spurious causes and specious self-justifications, there are, and were, legitimate Causes which attract sympathy and comprehension of many an honest man or woman. My childhood, in a very real sense, was insulated from the world outside by an atmosphere charged with tales of the (old) I.R.A. Thus, I grew-up in a kind of caulic isolation in which the history of the Irish (all versions and interpretations) and tales of The Troubles were daily bread, and became the dominant influence on my nascent sensibilities.

In consequence, aside from my secret obsession to master the forbidden language of the Sassenach, images of the (old) I.R.A. took on dimensions larger than life. Also, there were those who had lived through The Troubles and were now members of the Dail, obviously adding substance to tales of derring-do.

Out of my total absorption of all that was pertinent - both fact and romanticised fiction - to the (old) I.R.A., it was not surprising that my earlier writings, during the Thirties, were opaque reflexions of that total absorption. While one may smile indulgently today at the intensity of youthful convixions and the baseless passion one felt, the selexion of those earlier writings which follow still have a certain and patent validity, I feel, both psycholigical - and literary, so I have let them stand.

You might find it diverting to compare the dedication and the passion, so densely consistent in both cases, with the adolescent so-called "demands" and manipulated mindless agitation currently abroad in the country anent all manner of spurious and specious "causes". You may find the contrast stark enough to begin to look about you.

During The Troubles, when a member of the (old) I.R.A. entered a "safe" house, his greeting was always:

"God save all here, and bless the Work!"

It was a noble and ennobling cause.....

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OF THINGS IRISH

To be Irish is to be born different - not necessarily unique or exceptional, just different. And for an Irish baby to be born with a caul makes being Irish different, indeed. I actually gave no thought to my caul, until I was middle-age, and then but whimsically. Still, there may some truth to the superstitions the Irish attach to a caul.....

Because of the isolation of my childhood and early youth, and the bitter pride of my mother that somehow seemed to fill the house like an invisible, oppressive mist, it was perhaps naturally that I was early on drawn to the heroic legends of Ireland and the Poor Old Woman. It was also inevitable, I suppose, that I should become involved with the (OLD) I.R.A. - the Irish Republican Army.

By the time I was ten and two I knew by heart all the tales, including the artificial Lays of Ossian by the Scotsman with a droll sense of Gaelic humour. And the fact that there were men such as Dan Breen and Erskine and O'Higgins still alive gave a powerful albeit motionless impetus to such intellectual concerns.

When I came out to New York City I was delighted to find that there were, at that time, four Irish-American newspapers, two of which were bi-lingual - that is, they printed both Irish Gaelic and English. I immediately began contributing to all of them, and they published everything I wrote - there was no recompense, but the "Cause" made the mere thought of accepting money both mundane and reprehensible. Among the files I've kept over the years are bits and pieces of some of those early writings on Ireland and the Irish, and I have selected a few to be incorporated in the following pages. They are offered without explanation or apology, as they have a certain historical significance in terms of my development as a writer, as well as for my autobiography.

The library of Trinity College in Dublin was a favourite gathering place for writers, poets, historians, and idealistic youth. One of the most popular (successful) writers of my time was Seamus McManus, whose History Of Ireland was an incredible financial success - in the U.S. One day he was holding forth in the library and among his listeners was James Joyce. And after listening for a long while to the high-flying hyperbole of McManus, in which the most improbable virtues were being ascribed to Ireland and all things Irish, Joyce rose and went to the wall-slate (black-board), picked up a piece of chalk and wrote, in Irish:

"Hail to Seamus McManus, who writes poetry with his anus!"

Along with the German, the Kelt has had more written about him than any other race of the Western World. The Irish, Welsh, Scot, Manxman, Breton are all Kelts, and it may be significant that much of the so-called great English literature since the days of Billy-Of-Avon has actually been written by Irishmen or Anglo-Irishmen - some of whom were definitely more Irish than the Irish themselves, such as the Fitzes. Much of all that has been written about the Irish is pure blarney and has served only to enlarge and exaggerate the mythical romanticism of Things Irish, particularly in the U.S.

I recall attending a meeting of The Red Branch of Ulster at the Druid's Temple in San Francisco, during which a woman arose and introduced herself as "The O'Sullivan". I was a bit taken aback, and on questioning, she admitted that her forebears had come out to the States during the potato famine, had never been to Ireland, and was woefully ignorant of most everything Irish. And when I informed her that no woman could ever be addressed as "The O'Sullivan", or any other clann-head form of address, she was very upset, and, lifting her middle-aged head, stalked out of the room.

This kind of horrifying ignorance among the Irish-American I have encountered all across the country, and it was probably this aspect more than any other that gradually caused me to drift away from those who made the most noise about being Irish. Incidentally, the correct form of address for the wife of the leader of an Irish Clann has always been "Ni Sullivan". Only the clann-head could be addressed as "The".

But the fascination with the Irish has never been confined to the Irish, and I extract a few quotations from a few writers to illustrate my point farther along in this article, although probably the most insightful observations upon the Irish were by Irishmen, such as O'Casey and O'Brien, although from different points of view.

JACK YEATS: *"In Ireland every man knows he is unique. Consequently, if he falls down, somebody will pick him up. But in a country where every man is like every other man, the man who falls down has to beware the steam-roller!"*

Over the years I have read, literally, hundreds of books which allege to treat of the Irish and of Ireland, mostly by non-Irishmen - the sad songs, the merry wars have long been stored in stark and romantic detail in my memory-bank. And haunting the long and dusty corridors of my mind has been the spectre of a desire to someday write a different book about the Irish - something quite unlike the vast library that has mushroomed for centuries about the Kelt and his other-worldliness. Something rational, but a modern extension of Keltic evolution. Now, it would seem, I shan't have to, as it has been done for me, and in an epitomised form by a paragraph in the last chapter of Edna O'Brien's

lovely and lonely little book *Mother Ireland*. Her imagery conjures up the bitter-sweet melancholia of something forever completed, something forever over and done...and something that never was. And she points out yet again the absolute Irish necessity - like Wilde and Shaw and O'Casey and Joyce - of Edna O'Brien having to flee Ireland in order for her to grow and function as a writer. She wrote:

EDNA O'BRIEN: *"The characteristics of the Irish are a respect for the past, an indifference to the present, a sense of the unseen world, intellectual curiosity; the gift of poetic imagination, a cynical sense of humour, a brooding menalcholy, a subtle concept of what constitutes truth, an ingenious casuistry and a deviousness related to historical experience, and, above all, an inexhaustable interest in words, people, and spiritual matters!"*

An English writer of current reputation, writing about Things German, also saw fit to reference the Irish, as follows:

COLIN WILSON: *"The Germans, who are noted for their discipline, their thoroughness and love of abstract thought, are not a particularly intuitive or psychic nation. The Irish, noted for a certain whimsical attitude towards life and for a dislike of abstract thought, are highly intuitive, and frequently possess second-sight. When the two extremes are combined, the result is often a remarkable talent or genius. Goethe possessed the national Teutonic self-discipline and passion for ideas; he also came from a family that possessed second-sight. On the other hand, Shaw and Yeats, among the greatest of Irish writers, were both highly intuitive, acquired intellectual discipline, and both produced works that are remarkable in their combination of passion and intellectual intensity."*

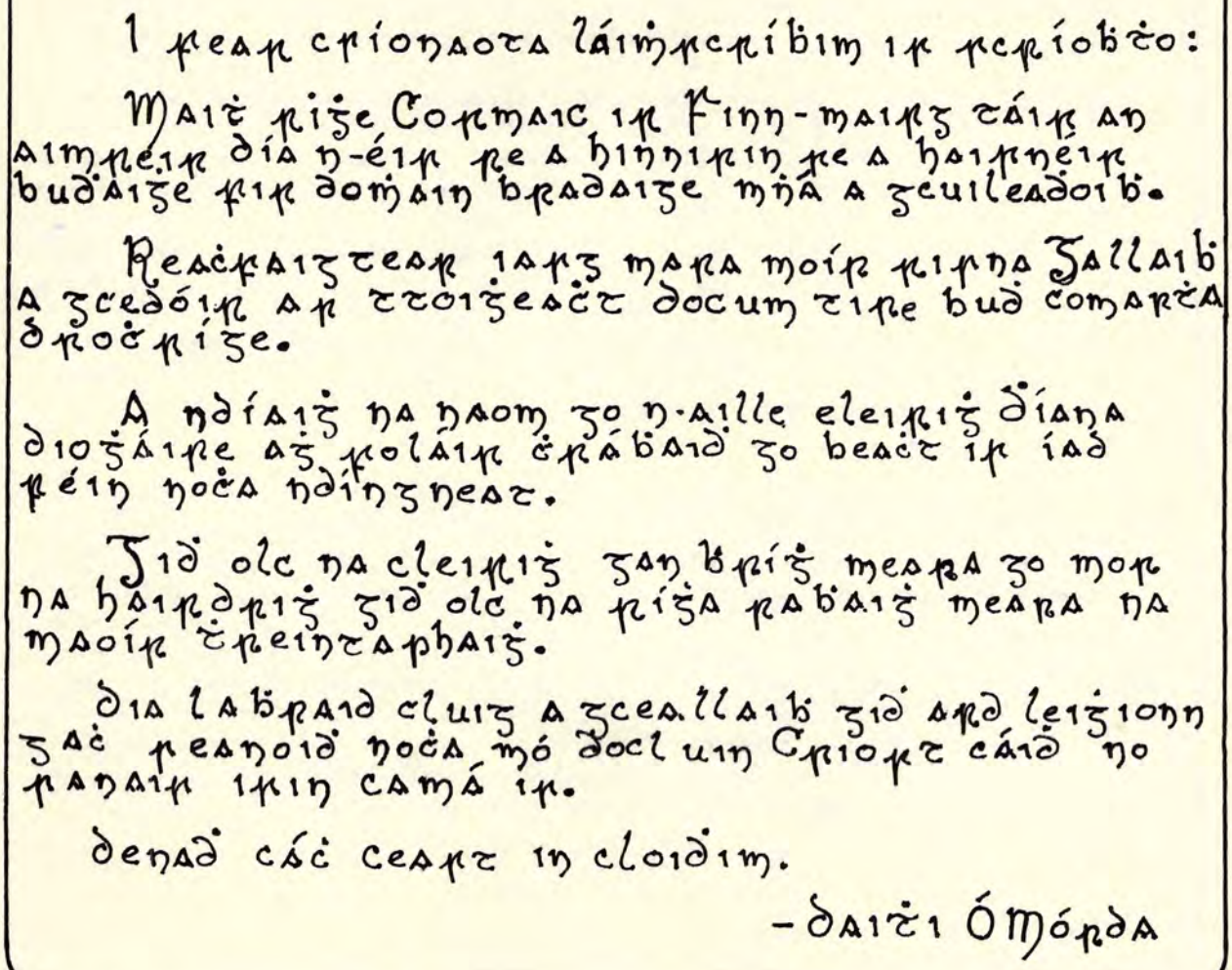
There has been too much glorification of defeat in Irish history. We need a new race of Irish revolutionaries: an unseen, mobile army of relentless men paralyzing with unexpected blows the machinery of government throughout the country; striking swiftly, inexorably, invinvibly - and vanishing. Men who will neither give nor seek quarter; men who will die quietly and decently without making speeches from the dock; men who will be impervious to everything but the shame of failure; men who will oppose ruthlessness with ruthlessness, superior force with superior intelligence; bitter, unrelenting fighters with no bowels of mercy, satisfied to die if they can strike deeply before the end.....a nation of fighters led by poets? - was there ever a greater tragedy?

* * *

THE KELTIC TONGUE

Contrary to what most people think, Gaelic is still spoken and written by the Irish, the Scots, the Welsh. Forms differ and all reflect Roman influence, but of all antique languages, only Gaelic has survived. In Ireland there are four regional variants of Gaelic, but knowing one, you will be understood in another place. That a native tongue, any tongue, maintains and reinforces a sense of national identity is understood.

An example of the Irish is depicted below, written when I was much more conversant in the language than at this writing. In as much as the language of the Sassenach was forbidden in my house as I was growing up, it would follow that I had, and still have, a special feeling for the Irish language. For those who have never seen Irish, the paean below may be of passing interest.


I gcéad chríonadta láimhscríbhinn is scríobtó:
Maith fíor Cormac is Finn-mac táir an aimsir dá n-éis re a hinnisin re a haisneis budaighe fir domain bradaighe mhá a gcuileadoibh.
Reachtaigtear is mara moir sinna Gallaibh a gceadóis ar tteigeacht docum tire budh comarca droch-fíge.
A ndíaigh na naom go n-aille eleisigh díana diogáire ag folái ecrábaidh go beacht is iadh féin noca ndíngneat.
Gidh olc na cleisigh gan brígh mear go mor na hairdrigh gidh olc na fígha fabaigh mear na maoir threintaphaigh.
Dia labraid cluig a gceallaibh gidh ard leigíonn gach fear noidh noca mó doclann Criost cáidh no fanaig isin camá is.
Denadh cách ceart in cloidim.
-Daithi Ó Mórda

APHORISMS FOR THE I.R.A.

The great weakness of all Irish movements towards freedom has always been the want of money.

The fears of the timid, the hopes of the corrupt, are the foundations of unjust governments in all ages.

We need men! - men above the cant of faction or the emptiness of political expediency. We need men with minds essentially combative and hearts impervious to deviation.

It is the essence of liberty that it should depend on its maintenance upon the respect it can arouse in humble men. Liberty has no foe more subtle than the humble man's sense of apathy.

Constitutional agitators (peace by talk) have been proved in so many cases liars and traitors, that constitutionalism may be regarded as a delusion and a snare.

The simplest things are the most affecting; so too are the most dazzling victories born of a simple plan.

The Battle of the Four Courts came about for perfectly good reasons...one might as well say for perfectly bad reasons.

War is a destructive business. What it cannot destroy, it will harden. Five thousand years of it have left us still misunderstanding. It is a cruel, rough, and primitive teacher, and all human methods of warfare appear foolish, clumsy, and theatrical.

A successful military decision depends on the time taken to affect it.

Bad weather and defensive strategy reduce fighting men to an intolerable state of uselessness.

"One can never be too strong for a battle!" - von Moltke.

If one would do battle, one must have a talent for it.

England can never be expected to make a full and honourable peace so long as she does not feel she has to make it. We must force that time.

Hardships are to be expected in war. It is natural, so do not think about them. They are insignificant when compared with the greatness of the issue - the realisation of Ireland a nation!

Once a war begins, both sides feel justified, and, consequently, must needs go on with it.

Peace...will come over-night.

A mob is ever arrogant - disperse it, and it will fall apart.

In the silence after a victorious battle, we Irish are soothed by the silence of departed years and Irishmen dead.

The positive acheivement of war is that it destroys many untruths. This is comforting. If one projects one's whole being headlong into war, one gains a pleasant feeling of detachment from all the old values.

Irishmen who would go off to war had best burn their homes behind them. Indeed, he should have no home at all. In this regard, the mercenary have their advantage, for they have the conscience of submarines.

Men do not mind getting tired for something sensible. Fighting men will hold out against terrible odds if they know there is a plan behind them.

When the rifles aren't blazing in the hills and traps aren't exploding, there is always the danger of a false picture arising in the soldier's mind, which tends to confuse the real thing. We have not yet learned to appreciate the wide gulf that lies between the real thing and the gesture.

When the greatness of the Irish Cause is recognizable, human speech has no experience to cope with it.

A town, a building, a monument reduced to rubble in time of war remains just rubble. Let us not break our stride to become sentimental over was the town, building, monument may have meant before.

Irish Nationalism, as propounded by DeValera, is something forcibly crammed into souls where it did not belong. No wonder so many Irishmen wander about the country as though looking for a place to vomit.

Desertion in time of war may be a symptom of insignificant or empty leadership. Lack of imagination is the worse vice of a commander.

Only as free and independent Irishmen can we make our own lives and live them and ride on the back of Time.

All training depots should be established as far from the trainee's home as possible.

War disappoints many - to disappoint ourselves in relation to it would be worse.

It is one thing to have no grounds for anxiety, but quite another to have no grounds for hope, either.

The Irish have a mania for play-acting - for dramatising life.

It may be right to destroy the Orange Order of Ulster, but it alone will not decide the Irish War. Besides, that is really the Orangemen's job, if they be real Irishmen. Then, too, we mayn't be successful, and that would create new political imponderabilis.

It is true that a soldier is part of the material of war, but this hardly justifies sacrificing that material because of it. It is equally true that in the moment of battle, a soldier doesn't have the sensation of being sacrificed.

We need not concern ourselves with whether war is a terrible teacher of good or evil; at least, it does educate the individual to sterner realities, even though in the education the intellect becomes arrested by an incomprehensible event. One cannot escape it, yet beyond this, war has nothing to teach us.

See to it that your men are never abandoned by the spirit of the event in its best sense.

To give Christmas parties for soldiers at war is to murder the whole idea.

When one stands on a high mountainm awaiting light to appear in the East, one does not start telling long stories.

The will to be superior to one's surroundings makes one feel objectively, because the subjective takes such a high value.

Would you know what true Irish bravery is? - it is this: the ability of Irishmen to say to their childen "You can read the poems of Ossian when you have no tea. Other children can't do that!"

The True Ulster nature: uncompromising, down-right self-controlled, provencially narrow. The subtleties by which men of wider minds, more complex natures, less stable purpose and convixion, are apt to paliate them. Their changes are utterly incomprehensible, and self-justifications of moral weakness arouse an Ulsterman's scorn.

As a war grows older, home affairs will gain importance in the minds of soldiers. Peace, as a condition, takes precedence. We must avoid a long war.

"Man tries to put an actuality in the place of an idea. It is based on the premise of the actuality and therefore works out quite wrongly and disappointingly, compared with the ideal. Man wants to make dreams come true. The idea that such a procedure might be bad for the ideal does not enter his head. It is hard for him to bear the fact that actuality is stronger than ideals. Hence the mistakes of '67, '48, '03, '98 were duplicated in 1916."

We have spoilt ourselves by expecting Almighty God to be reasonable - or, let us say, our priests have. At least, we expected Dia to conjure up reasonableness into the heart and mind of the Sassenach. Or maybe it was Daniel O'Connell who was responsible for this silly notion. We would be better armed against the future injustices if we appreciated more the senselessness of both Dia and the Sassenach.

Long wars inevitably lead to rationing among non-combatants. The masses will become unpleasantly aware of their participation in the destiny and life of the Irish Nation, and the working-man's wife will have a hand in dictating the laws. This is not the way of Irishmen but the way of the masses! - no national unity, no courage, no sacrifice can prevent this from happening. Thus, no long wars.

When war, however righteous, becomes the norm, when it shaves and brushes its teeth before one every day, it has lost its dignity. Long wars must be avoided, for one cannot run the risk of having war betray characteristics of peace and ordinary life, to which it bears no relation. We must remember, too, that in the past it is man who has made war, man who was ignorant of what he had wrought, and man who could never discern the shape of war.

The Irish mind and Irish sentiment have the gift of piling themselves up gaily on derelicts without noticing it. What an acheivement it would be if the Irish War were to sweep away all this wreckage, if Irishry could bring its own feelings to meet that which has come to it from somewhere, at some time, for some of us.....

War as waged by Rapparees produces a psychological reaction in one's adversary which professional soldiers can never inspire. When your enemy dreads every hedge and wood and every secret place, one has a tremendous psychological advantage. But this is true only in the beginning! Your advantage will eventually become a cold matter of fact to him. We cannot afford a long war.

One of the weakest links in the chain of fighting men is the

soldier's contact with home in time of war. Battles have been lost because of letters from home, from the cloying insistence of the weak and mundane doubts expressed behind the lines. During time of war, the fighting man should have absolutely no contact with home; then he will be forced to trust himself and his luck entirely.

To impute no malicious or conscious invention to the Sassenach would be to save his character at the expense of his infamy.

The principle of reprisals is low, savage, and brutal. An eye for an eye is another matter; it is neither an ethical law nor an ethical point of view; it stands outside the limits of jurisprudence. It is a *rule* of war, not a *law* of war, justified by primitive equity. Reprisals, as practiced during the Tan War, rested upon the judgement of man, and therein lay the fault. The significance of reprisals must be reckoned before hand! To punish for the sake of vengence - what a foolish notion. To concentrate on revenge is to become dependent on others for one's deeds! Think well on this.

In the time of Davitt, there was no place in politics for an honest Irish Nationalist, save in the ranks of any revolutionary party that stood for the severing of the connexion with England and an Irish Ireland....it is doubly true today.

The fears of the timid, the hopes of the corrupt are the foundations of unjust government in all ages.

Aspirations which rely on political vehicles for their attainment must be subordinated to the deeper note of a national humanity - that constant value in the march of nations without which Art is void and History a Myth and all Causes madness.

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Irish Republican Bulletin

Vol. 6, No. 8 | 1914 Broadway, N. Y. | March-April, 1949

THOUGHTS FOR EASTER WEEK, 1949

"Those who would give up essential liberties to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety".

Unless this generation of Irishmen protest under arms against the continued and insidious influence of the Common Enemy, against men who count being politicians above being Irishmen, against the Stormont 'government' at Belfast, it has no future and deserves none. We who belong to it, as it now stands, are dead. . . . .

The 'governments' in Ireland since 1921—and this is particularly true of the "Free" State 'governments'—operated with their guiding principle the philosophy of the louse—to sit tight as long as possible. . . .

The fears of the timid, the hopes of the corrupt, are the foundations of unjust government in all ages.

In the time of Davitt, there was no place in politics for an honest Irish Nationalist, save in the ranks of the revolutionary party that stood for severing the connection between England and an Irish-Ireland. It is doubly true today.

We need MEN!—men above the cant of faction or the emptiness of politically expedient phrases.

It is the essence of liberty that it should depend on its maintainance upon the respect it can arouse in humble men. Liberty has no foe more subtle than the humble man's sense of apathy and helplessness.

Our ears, straining for voices of other days, have been deafened and stunned by the petty trumpeting and the vulgar insistence of the politically mediocre in Ireland since the "treaty" of 1921. In the clamour of these clanging, brazen voices beating futilely upon the unrelenting march of history many precious messages have been lost—and none more precious than the message of the Shan Van Vocht whispering still amid the ragged skirts of want.

We need a new race of Irish revolutionaries: an unseen, mobile army of unrelenting men paralyzing with unexpected blows the machinery of government throughout the country . . . striking swiftly, inexorably, invincibly—and vanishing. Men who will neither give nor seek quarter—men who will be imprevious to everything but the shame of failure; men who will oppose ruthlessness, superior force with superior intelligence . . . bitter, unrelenting fighters with no bowels of mercy, satisfied to die if they can strike deeply before the end. . . . .

(The above represents the last writing I did for the ancient Irish cause.)

TO A YOUNG AMERICAN WRITER ~~

You say you are writing a novel - and I must admit that I cringed a bit when I read that. You further say that you are following the Jamesian theory of the novel, but I must wonder how many of your generation read Henry James, or is even aware of that context out of which he wrote. And I admit to feeling a sense of relief that you did not say you were writing the Great American Novel...

I applaud your ambition and naturally wish you well. Your sister, I assume, will keep me informed of your progress, in as much as if you are seriously writing, Middleton's admonishment would apply - *i.e.*, genuinely creative writing demands of the writer that he eschew all social contact, avoids reading other writers, abandons an early martini, and, above all, avoids sex like a communicable social disease! That last may startle you, but there are studies reinforcing the notion that something of creativity is diluted by sex.

Speaking of which - we all drown today in a veritable niagara of trashy sex-novels, chiefly written by illiterate women, and their lurid covers depict the total story-line. One wades knee-deep amid such trash at every check-out stand in every super-market. They reveal atrocious grammar, a gross semantical carelessness, unbelievable syntax - like the impossibe human dialogue of TV commercials. I have long felt that these trashy sex-novels are being written by the type of woman who has just discovered she can use four-letter words, without feeling self-conscious. In a phrase, the modern American so-called novel is like a bad joke that failed.

You have to also consider what may happen to your virgin manuscript after it leaves your hands. In my time, the professional legitimacy - that is, literary qualifications - was never in doubt.

Today, we have failed journalism majors, mostly of Hunter College or Vassar, posing as book-reviewers - worse, as critics! The momentary intellectual interest their poses may arouse is pretty much that of a zoological species; but their ability to contribute to the genre of the novel, or the American literary tradition, is *nil*. Truly it is incomprehensible, this boundless egotism of the untalented and half-educated. And while such types have abounded in every social or political context, today we witness deliberately managed idiocy and a pulling down to the least common denominator of the crowd those perm-

nent literary values which have always distingusihed a given *kultur u. Zeitgeist*. This destruction of our once permanent values has been most deliberate, cynical, and all pervasive - for dollars, not for glory.

The modern American "novel" offers the most stunning and as frightening an example of the earth-commonality of modern taste, morés and aesthetic degradation. In a phrase, what is being accepted, today, as the American novel defies comprehension. And you are willing to put your manuscript into such hands?

Current publishing statistics proclaim rather boldly if not vulgarly has been the managed dehumanisation of American Letters, obvious debasing of aesthetical literary appreciation, and their inability to apply objective criteria. Stated another way: there is nothing fastidious about modern American writers and their uncultured readers.

Yes, the current breed of American publishers must take the full blame for our literary impoverishment. Since the Sixties, and the passing of such notable figures as Maxwell Perkins and Alfred Knopf, a miasma of corruption of the novel has taken place, brought about by an overt cynicism and calculated avarice. In consequence American Letters are fraudulent - and, hopefully, self-defeating. Let me at this juncture suggest you re-read Gersheim's *Writers In Crisis*.

The hysterical economic protestations of American publishers is given the lie by the fact that the traditional literary novel is still being written - and published - in England and Europe, and an obviously discerning public exists there for such novels. Of course it is true that as an American novelist you are handicapt in such market in that American writers do not write English! - they write a dialect of English, that grows more and more ephemeral as each succeeding generation seeks to throw its immature ego slant-wise across the accumulated wisdom and values of the past.

While it is true that money makes strange bed-fellows, modern American publishers must eventually be brought to the bar to answer the charge of the literary rape of a nation.

You speak of how carefully you are following all of the instructions (sic!) you've received from publishers on how to submit the manuscript. My advice is to burn them at once. While it is true that a handful of people still feel that God could have been better advised - when He made the world - it is equally true that the creative process requires nothing external to the creator for its fulfillment, and most of all, how to physically design and package a page of typewritten or hand-written paragraphs.

There was an Irish publisher - Talbot Press, I believe - I

once did a bit of business with them - who received a bulky manuscript via the post one day, written in long-hand, and on irregular pieces of butcher-paper. The editors immediately proclaimed the work a work of genius. Without fully reading the manuscript, they published it.....

Here, of course, as you have already found out, there are a plethora of sophomoric media allegedly claiming they can make purses of a sow's ear - that is, you, too, can become a writer, just fill-in the coupon and send six empty beer-cans...with money. They proclaim an awesome list of mandatory prerequisites before you can submit a manuscript, with hygienically proper paragraphing, indenting or pagination and line spacing. Tacit insults - and they even charge you for it. The current hysteria anent word-processors is also getting much attention in such media, and yet one seeks in vain for legitimate comment on the mysteries of the truly creative experience - which no-one can help you with, anyw

Naturally, in the face of such epicene concern for packaged sterility, one cannot expect to find writing of the highest order.

While it might be momentarily interesting, psychologically speaking, to analyze the formalised mechanism of the modern novel that has been so negatively affected by our new breed of publishers, and an excursion, also momentarily, into the basis of immature egotism of our immature editors and readers, nothing would really be advanced. As was observed by Baudelaire in 1841: *"Those who know need not be told;those who do not know can never be told!"*

The dehumanisation of the American novel has been inspired solely by money. The vigour of the assault upon once-traditional literary values is in inverse proportion to the distance between the current generation - of which you are a member - and normative human aspirations. In the absence of the steadying influence of traditional or accepted norms, anarchy can only result; simply observe a striking example of literary anarchy in the plethora of trashy novels abounding. The inevitability of four-letter words and a myriad of bed-room scenes are predictable, impart an equal inevitable monotony and boredom, and which can only exasperate in the long term - much like a fun-house of mirrors which infinitely reflect each other, no form is ultimate, and all will be eventually ridiculed and revealed as pure nothingness. You might find comfort in that.

If you remember Henry James' passionate enthusiasm for the future of the novel, you must also remember that he was writing within the Victorian literary tradition. It never really took hold here, more is the pity, despite efforts by such as Paul Rosenfeld to revive James now and then. Myself, of course, I can still find comfort in the fact that the Jamesian-type novel is still be written and published abroad.

You, of course, cannot find such comfort, so you will have to, perhaps, make your own. As Pricilla said to John Alden: *To thy ownself be true.*

Writing legitimate novels is an activity of enormous calibre despite the shallow acclaim given such writings by John Cheevers' shallow novels. In the downfall of religion and the inevitable relativisms of modern science in the latter half of this century, the legitimate novel has been forced to take upon itself the profoundest problems of humanity, of greater significance as a cultured human activity, from which contemporary civilisation derives is justification and dignity. I defy you to find literary justification or dignity in the modern American novel.

The betrayal of the novel may be summed up thusly: in America, the novel has been systematically denuded of substance, subjectivity, social importance. The sophomoric arrogance of the modern American novel is revealed as a thing of no importance, without any social consequence. Their sterility, like Eliot's *Wasteland,* denies the perceptive reader even the charity of a rationalised benevolence. Perhaps your novel can change the current drift. I certainly wish you well.

But I would remind you, *en passant*, that there was a time, when people believed that orchids were born in the air, without roots. There was a time when people believed that culture did not depend upon the continua of permanent normative values. It was only a short time ago, yet it was long ago.....

* * *

And now, let us speak seriously about the novel.....

While it is true that many thousands of words written by me have been published over the years, that I've written half a dozen novels, and have been happily involved with luminaries of the literati and aesthetic experience, talked with them, dined with them, and with a few members on the distaff side, slept with them, I have never considered myself that qualified to be an authority on Conjugating-The-Verb, even though there have been lectures and seminars conducted by me, upon request from divers colleges.

And even when I was lecturing to students of Creative Writing II, I remained bemused by the spectacle of people coming to listen to words of a stranger about what should have been obvious to them, had they done their home-work amid sources readily available. But when that fraudulent ogre known in lisping lavender syllables as *Creative Writing II,* grew more and more puffed-up by the shallow conceit of self-styled teachers of the craft of writing, I simply chucked the labour. As it is written in the Good Book, one does not cast pearls before swine...

However, human nature being what it is, your faith in that odd aura that hangs over my name, I will make the effort, however inconclusive, to touch on a few points you mayn't be as yet aware of. I have extracted a few paragraphs from previous lectures which may be a kind of guide here and there. But, as I've said before, to thine ownself be true, and to hell with the empty mouthing of compeers.

Contrary to many, the literary genre of the novel did not come into being during the early part of the last century. Historical references reveal that the first novel in an easily recognizable modern novel-form, was written more than 1,000 years ago in Japan. Title was *Genji*, and was a rousing tale of endless adventures of the hero.

It was essentially narration, in which the adventures were *described*. Knowledge of *Genji* is a part of the intellectual equipment of every modern-day cultured Japanese, just as *Beowolfe* is required reading for Englishmen, the *Seven Immortals* for the Chinese, and that lovely fraud known as the *Lays of Ossian* is to the Irishman, while in India it is the *Baghavad Gita*.

The enduring novelty of *Genji* turned on its kaleidoscopic, or O.D.T.A.A. *action*. It was many centuries later that the literary genre we now call the novel entered Western culture. And it should be noted that for a long time early Western novels were narratives from which the reader viewed endless physical adventures. Action, in other words, with utterly no character development.

But by the end of the 18th-century readers had become more educated, sophisticated, and slightly fastidious in their reading, to whom the endless recital of endless adventures of manly males and the perpetual swooning of comely maidens ceased to be of interest. It was at this point that character developement began to emerge, and has in the hands of legitimate novelists, continued ever since. The mostdifficult art of the novelist lies in just that, and there are not many contemporary novelists who have mastered the art. Description of what a character is wearing is not character delineation. Describing movements of hands, lips, eyes, phrases, emphatic dialogue would be.

Enjoyment of reading a novel occurs in the mind, obviously and that means that the psychic mechanism must function in a certain way, and the prerequisite to trigger that function must be present in the novel. Action that is simply narrated or described does not in itself contain that prerequisite, as action, *per se*, is merely mechanical elements and aesthetically dubious. Action should always be at a minimum, remembering, however, that that minimum is indespensable.

In the novel, dramatic (human) interest is a psychological neccesity, and a *suggestive* plot is one of the decisive aesthetical,

sensorial factors, of which there cannot be too many. Reader attention is a psychological *a priori* that operates by means of affective preferences - in other words, interests. This psychological insight of the reader has replaced his former interest in dramatic action, which is a happy development, as it is impossible to invent any new plots. An allusion to movement and tension will suffice, but overdo the action and you end-up with a paralytic novel, as Proust.

While much nonsense has been written about plot in a novel, it is all delusion and a snare. Plot is not the substance of the novel but the scaffolding on which the story-line is erected. The essence of the novel does not lie in narrating what is happening, but precisely the opposite, in the influences upon a character's life, his being, or his role in the ensuing milieu. You, yourself, can recall certain favourite novels, and you will always recall first the characters, not the plot. Probably the best example of how the novel is independent of any plot are the works of Stendhal - *Lucien Leuwin,* for example, wherein we find innumerable pages treating of a young military officer and the willowy young girl - *yet nothing happens!*

The aesthetic stress or emphasis on the marvellousness confined within one hour, and not expatiating the extraordinary, is what gives Stendhal's work, and all legitimate novels, its specific graces and charms. The novelist must involve the unknown reader in the temporary world he, the novelist, has created. He must interest him in the inhabitants of that world, narrow the reader's interior vision so that his psychological apparatus is focussed sharply on the world. Only in this way can the reader become involved and really care about what is going on in the novel. A novel that lacks this unique magic of seperating the reader from his daily surroundings is a very bad novel.

The legitimate novel multiplies our existence, freeing for a little while from our Self and the world around us, and has the sublime gift of bestowing upon us the gift of transmigration!

No writer can claim to be a novelist unless his talent possesses the gift of making us forget the world beyond the pages of his work. A novel is still-born when it is loaded down with transcendental intentions, be they ideological, political, symbolical, satirical, or, sexual - even though that is the fashion of the day. These are never a legitimate theme for the legitimate novel.

Those who speak mindlessly of the mystery novel genre, detective story genre, sophisticated genre, etc., reveal their ignorance for all the world to behold. *There is only the literary genre of the novel!* There will always be biologic sports of any genre but the genre itself remains inviolate.

The American reading public buys fewer legitimate novels today than ever before, while books of nefarious literary character drown us in their hundreds of thousands. This fact alone, even if there were no other intrinsic reasons, should suffice to make us suspect that some thing is terrible awry with the American novel.

To say that 90% of novelists today have no comprehension of the literary genre of the novel is too simplistic a statement. To write a *good* novel has always been a most difficult thing, nor has a gift of talent as a writer ever been a guarantee for producing a good novel. It is also true that a literary genre may be exploited via its least common denominator, as witness the plethora of trashy sex-novels abounding today. But just as the earlier reader grew weary of narrative action, I am satisfied that you, at least, will live to see the day when novels, and genuine novelists, will return.

Nor can we say that because there are so few cultured Americans today there are fewer legitimate novels. The contemporary mythology anent artistic creation turning exclusively upon nothing more than an artist's shallow egotism, personal inspiration, or self-proclaiming talent, is given the lie by the simple realisation that the sudden appearance of a true genius will automatically turn the tide.

I am aware, even as you, that we are surrounded by hordes of *poseurs* who proclaim self-expression, regardless of how vulgar, feeling allegedly inspired by divine revelation, their oblique vision of life are all that matter as far as their "art" is concerned. This has always been the specious defense of *poseurs*. Nor can they even define the word "talent" collectively. Genuine talent represents only a subjective disposition brought to bear upon a certain material - in our frame of reference, the language! But take note - language is independent of an individual writer's gift. Without this subjective disposition, even genius is of no avail.

You mentioned that you were confused after reading Croce's theory of literature, in which he denied the existence of literary form in the novel. I met Bernard Croce years ago, and would advise you, with no hesitation, to chuck his theories, as they are no longer accepted by critical literati. You have only to consider that his denial of literary form to the novel has left no trace in aesthetics. But it would be a gross error to believe that the novel-form is limitless, which is why it is important that you keep your mind and ambition directed towards a traditional literary genre, and ignore like a communicable social disease our current dross.

It is quite obvious that the contemporary American novel has over-worked a very narrow surface-vein of novelistic material. There is an indefinite number of themes, characters, situations for the novelist

but there is a finite limit to the novel-form! As early novelists perfected their art, they began to develop a social awareness of time and place. Descriptions of actions began to be replaced by descriptions of people - not yet characters. Thus, the material of the novel became of limitless proportions. The novelist took on the rôle of a reflector of his *kultur und Zeitgeist* in a way no other artistic medium could. With our latter-day sophistication anent man as a social animal, the artisiic talent can work with an ever greater number of subjective possibilities. The novel is not called "novel" for nothing!

In the beginning, the novel thrived simply on the mere novelty of its subject-matter. As the novelist developed a social awareness, that awareness began to appear in novels, thereby enlarging the perception and refining the taste of the reader. And as better and better novels appeared, works of lesser moment fell by *am weg*. Victorian England was probably the high-water mark of the social novel that was developed almost exclusively from characters portrayed. This required, among other aspects of a novelist's equipment, talent of a very high or refined order, coupled with an acute social sense. It has always been my thought that the very high order of talent required gave way shortly after the turn of the century to what became known as the "popular" novel. This was a medium well-suited to men of lesser talent, but with respectable skill.

In America there was an army of popular novelists who supplied "Summer Fiction" on the average of one novel a year for 30 years or so. Names such as MacGrath, Vance, Phillips, Mundy, Bachelor, Norris, Baum, *et al,* come readily to mind. The hey-day of the legitimate popular novel might be said to have been in the Twenties, here.

There was a radical shift in the thrust of the novel, after Hitler's War, but it was merely a narrowing of possibilities, where objective dissertaion began to replace subjective analysis. Your modern American novelist is a dauber in literature, and here is why: the genuine novelist presents an object, person, dialogue in the fullness of its being, in self-presence, as it were. The dauber only lays down few feeble allusions, generally unessential. The more one reads the modern American novel, the more one realises there is nothing there - only an allusion, spurious at best, to the modern human condition.

The imperative of the novel is autopsy!

Most story-lines can be told in a few dozen words, but the difference between the authentic novel and the me-too-types cluttering up book-stalls today is that the authentic novel presents the story-line in its immediate and patent reality! It is the self-presence of a character or characters that interests us, being admitted to their inner life, comprehending them and their motivations, being while read-

ing truly immersed in their world.

This is the autoptic method. Reflect for a moment upon all of the great novels that you've read, and which have stayed with you. Chances are that you will recall the characters before you recall the story-line. An excellent example would be *Don Quixote*. Our perception is filled by Cervantes with the genuine *presence* of his characters. A conventional description or mere reportage is not to be found. Reader interest is aroused when the reader wants to enter into the lives, not the actions, of the characters, not merely to be told about their life. Allusions and narration only emphasise the *absence* of what is alluded to, and that absence would be like the removal of the keystone from a Roman arch.

The authentic novel is urged into being by a magnificent motivation, turning from the conventional signs and symbols, sterile social forces, the earth-commoness of everyman, to a subjective contemplation of time and place. The plot of a novel, as I have said, is not its most important element. What is important is that the plot is written-out well, and has an anchor in everyman's reality. Limp sensibilities are not for us.

When a novelist merely states an object, such as "Mary was a long-legged blonde" - and nothing else, he is asking us to be the novelist! Mary, in this case, should be projected with visible facts *in toto,* so that I, as reader, could discover and define Mary's long-leggedness. However, there is also the risk of antagonising a reader with endless details, resulting in stark boredom and rejection. Consider Proust as an excellent example of dramatised tedium.

Much sophomoric copy has been written about this-or-that novel as being "action-packed". The silly cartoons children watch from the idiot-tube of TV are "action-packed". The novel must be, by its very nature, projected at an intellectually leisurely pace, giving a reader the time to look around, as it were; to take a good look at the characters, their environment, their humanity, the wealth of the lives and minds. Even Goethe remarked that the true novel was a slow-moving form of literary genre.

If we are reading a novel in which the characters appeal to us, we will continue reading, regardless of how trite or banal the story-line may be. This should afford you a key to the real powers of the authentic novelist. Such character-interest is not because we are interested in what the characters are doing, but because it is they who are doing it. This would obviously apply to Sorel, Copperfield or Sancho - all appealling *characters*, who interest us in what they do.

The future and the substance of the novel deserves further

articulation through an individual writer's comparison of the classical and indigenous novel.

Someone, I forget who, once observed that the theatre of the French was an art-form for aristocrats. We might therefore say of the modern Amrrican novel that it has become a vehicle for pandering to the lower instincts of the uncultured man. And what was the aristocracy? - an highly refined, highly ethical proper *social form,* or if you prefer, a classification. A work of art lives on its *form,* not on its materials. Gold does not hallow an egg by Fabregé, and inferior material has never cured a novel. The legitimate novel also lives on its form, not its material, and form would naturally include what has been called "presentativeness".

The essential grace and force it emanates springs from its structure, its organisation. The structure, erroneously called plots, is the properly artistic part; the aesthetic literary grace is then super-imposed on the structure.

The novel becomes a genuine work of art because of the *form* it imposes upon its material or subject-matter. The so-called dramatic interest in a novel is of no aesthetic value, in other words, but forms a structural necessity for the aesthetical and literary grace of the work. It is also a psychological necessity. The suggestive plot is one of the decisive aesthetic factors, of which there can not be too many in a novel. Action, as I have iterated, is a mere mechanical element, and amounts to so much dead aesthetic weight. Therefofe, it should always be held to a minumum - but cannot be totally disposed with.

Relative to the novelist being a subjective image-maker of his time and place, you could do worse than read a couple of novels by Albert Halper, written at the beginning and ending of the Thirties: *Union Square* and *The Little People*. Both are excellent examples of the novelist as a socio-political observer and recorder within a middle-class context - which is the bulk of any Western society. If you find you have an interest in depicting genuine human relationships as the vehicle for your talent, try reading Harold MacGrath, who wrote more than 30 novels reflecting human sentiment without sentimentality, or by being vulgarly "realistic". In terms of novel writing as legitimate literature, which is primarily a function of how the novelist employs the language, read Louis Joseph Vance, who was probably the most literate of writers of Summer Fiction from 1900 to 1933.

No, there has never been any such thing as The Great American Novel, nor will there ever be , despite many temporary claims by self-styled critics, usually from Hunter College or Vassar. There have been powerful American novels, and Thomas Wolfe undoubtedly wrote most

of them during the decade of the Thirties. The closest thing to that chimera The Great American Novel may have been Wolfe's *You Can't Go Home Again,* published posthumously. He employed with a rare talent a very old form - narrative prose, with this difference: Wolfe's prose was poetical narrative, and carried the story-line forward in terms of what that poetical imagery conveyed about his characters. But more important, perhaps, in the history of the novel, Wolfe raised to the level of true art the deliniation of character through poetical introspection with which the unknown reader found easy relateability.

All of the novelists mentioned were subjective mirrors of their time and place, and each had a literary philosophy derived from literary genre of the novel that reached back to *Genji*. That philosophy remains as valid today for the serious novelist.

While the Thirties were a bit before your time, the global unrest, the clash of spurious ideologies, the organised fragmentation of social morés and the abdication of traditional tabus - all conspired to create new regions of reflexion for the novelist. There was a rash of socio-political "novels" that added a minute new dimension to the literary genre of the novel - but not to the novel form. There was a range from Sherwood Anderson's *Dark Laughter,* Conrad Aiken's *King Coffin,* V.F.Calverton's *The Man Inside,* to such as Phillip Wylie's *Generation of Vipers* and Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*.

After Hitler's War the narrowing of the novel began, and a good example of the miniaturisation of the once limitless field of the novel may be exemplified in Norman Mailer's *Deerpark*. As has been said, in order to know where you are, you must know where you've been, and the lot of the authentic novelist is a lifetime of reading novels from the very beginning, and writing prodigiously until one is 30 - and then burning everything written until then. It was Edgar Wallace, an English mystery-writer of the Thirties, who suggested that. You cannot re-invent the wheel - *i.e.,* the novel form, so don't try.

You should be concerned only with writing a good novel. If it contains any greatness, literary or otherwise, posterity, not our self-proclaimed literary critics, will assure its endurance.

* * *

And now, if you have stayed with me this far, a final word:

The American writer who is a select writer whose works rarely appear in commercial print, is born *ex nihilo*.

Since we assume our myths as matter-of-fact, we demand that the truly talented writer fit his genius into our preformed notions of just what a writer is supposed to write.

This is not a paradox - it is simply the impossible tragedy of the truly creative writer in American today, who must, in order to be true to himself and his gifts, doubt everything but his art, as Paul Rosenfeld once said to me. The select writer is predestined by some curious fault in fate to forever have his whole being flung continuously towards the unlived future, the hyperborian periferi of the genuinely creative experience.

Born into a dense and inarticulate American literary tradition, the select writer is also born in innocence of the price to be paid for his non-conformity towards the accepted American aesthetic syndrome. The more gifted the writer, the more unconditionable he is likely to be; the more critically must he examine the literary traditions he finds about him. The principle of interior reality, as it functions within the creative sphere, is inviolate.

If it is a characteristic of neurosis that it effects a displacement somewhere, it well might be the test of genius by how precisely the limits and the richness of displacement his writings accord his readers. Something more deeply felt and seasoned than the mere abstracting of dead men's notions must be communicable to the unknown reader, and the select writer's appreciation of his role must be as catholic as that of Guy Fawkes in jail.

The ideal, of course, has always been a wistful, eager blending of classical austerity and sensorial enthusiasm, something deep and rich, decorative and penetrating.

Language alone contains the secret and the art of suggestion and sensation. The current plethora of third-rate novels is strident testament of the pemmican diet being served at the national level. The writings of the select writer, on the other hand, are created to the north of everyman's daily experiences. Perhaps the most damning if humourous indictment of American Letters was penned by Earl Wilson, a "gossip " columnist in New York:

> *"The writing industry is being taken over by strip-tease gals who flap it three times at the customers, and then dash for their dressing-room to finish Chapter 8. I, too, have a navel, but there is no rhinestone in it!"*

So you should realise by now that it is entirely and totally up to you.

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THE PATHOLOGY OF GERMAN IDEOLOGY

Americans are very fond of fad-words, and the making of graphic but non-grammatical expressions. The tacit assumption among the masses of uneducated seems to be: I really can't express myself but you know what I mean...and, of course, 'you' never know what they mean.

They are also given to repeating words but recently discovered by so-called news-broadcasters, words not likely to have been added to their native vocabulary, and because they are fad-words, there is an obvious lack of communication. The growing inability to manage this dialect of the English language we call American makes for more and more illiteracy and an erosion of cultural norms whereby men can live together.

One of the fad-words long abused by mindless minions is the word "ideology". It is used by politicians, cause-groups, "queers", news-broadcasters, and the man in the street. Rarely does the speaker know what he's talking about, and no-one seems to care. In seeking to come to grips with the German psyche, one early on learns that it cannot be approached without stumbling over "ideology" at every turn. And because the word has been so illy defined by our modern pundits, and because understanding of it in terms of the German evolution is essential, I will define it in its proper frame of reference.

Ideology has been defined as ideal or abstract speculation and visionary theorizing. Think of that the next time you hear a politician or a news-broadcaster use the word, and see how meaningless is his usage. Ideology also means a system of ideas concerning phenomena, especially those of social life; the manner of thinking characteristic of a class or an individual. Both meanings are applicable to any reference to German ideology, which actually began with Kant, and has advanced but little.

It would appear that the modern German and the modern Frenchman share a common historical pathology. Two historically dominant characteristics of the German psyche are obvious today - a mystical veneration of a past that never was; and a traditional social insecurity since the destruction of the *symbols* of the old aristocracy.

When Descartes proclaimed: *"I think! - therefore I am!"*, he unwittingly laid the cornerstone of what we call German Philosophy. From Herder, Fichte, Winklemann to Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer the ghost of Descartes proposition haunts all German philosophical posits. It is also easy to find a modern corollary in the pronouncements of the Dadaists and the Bauhaus cadre in the first three decades of this century, and the destructiveness of certain modern groups of German youth who have taken an aspect or single posit of past German philosophy and attempt to construct a life upon their own mystical interpretation.

* * *

Speaking of German youth, and one must never forget them in any contemplation of the Teutonic psyche, youth of no other nation, save modern Communists countries - Russia, Cuba, China, East Germany, have been subjected to monolithic structuring in thought and act.

The so-called German Youth Movement (GYM) was and is traditional, extending back before the 1848 Rising. Its career was checkered enough, particularly during the time of Wilhelmine Germany, but the basic GYM was blown to bits at Ypres in 1914, and has never recovered - the subsequent dominance of the Hitler Youth Movement not-with-standing. In the oldest cemetary in Cologne I found a weather-beaten stone bearing a single word: *Wandervogel* (Wandering Bird), and it struck me at that moment that tombstones were truly Young Germany's milestones - from Flanders to the Volga, from the Polar Circle to the Sahara; from tombstones of Königsberg and Breslau to those ringing Berlin.

During the early Weimar days, many attempts were made to revive the GYM along its original lines - *i.e.*, the irrational idealism of Herder, Fichte, Arndt, John, Langemarck, Kleist, the poet Körner, and such. All failed, due as much to regional jealousies as political disorientation, to where the Hitler Youth Movement could and did absorb them all, and redirected their thrust. But the allure of "Youth" in a name still found thousands of adherents in the early Twenties, more as a traditional reflex social act than any deliberately considered program for one's life.

But the failure of the GYM to get its message across to the reigning order and powers was an inherent weakness. They voiced negation without affirmation, elusion rather than conclusion. (I am still speaking of the Weimar Republic period.) Lacking that characteristic German trait that had been the source of their influence in Wilhelmine Germany - *i.e.*,

internal discipline practiced for a purpose - they too often demonstrated gross irrationalism.

The uniform, as it were, of the GYM has always been shorts and hob-nailed shoes and lumber-shirts. The *Freikorp Lützow* at Breslau adopted a uniform of black with red piping and gold buttons - thereby providing the tricolour flag of Imperial Germany. As an historical aside I might mention that the *Bauhaus* cadre also started in Breslau. And I have seen in Cologne, Düsseldorf, Bonn, Frankfurt middle-aged men running around in the old GYM uniforms, pretending to be representing the youth. Something about the blind leading the halt...

German patriotism, after 1815, has always been ready to flaunt itself at the slightest provocation, and a self-defined patriotism was also a hall-mark of the GYM. But as a revolution, so-called,rather than precipitating social crisis, which a lot of German youth actually believed they could do, the GYM was the symptom of a crisis, and yet to be resolved in West Germany. Nothing was reformed from 1848 › 1914, and nothing has been reformed since, even though a new political element - 'democracy' - has been added to the equation.

But what no-one seems to consider is that democracy is quite unGerman, that democracy was *given* to Germany after their collapse because of Hitler's War, and that it was not a natural, internal political evolution. Still, the GYM still abounds in one form or another, at once familiar and circular.

When Wilhelm II unveiled a monstrosity of a statue at Leipzig in 1913, the GYM felt this was the occasion to demonstrate. There were students from all of Germany, including Austria, and the speakers, all of them young, spoke bravely and sentimentally of freedom and truth and honesty - of the demand that youth be allowed to educate - and discipline! - itself. And if all this has a recently familiar ring, as of the Sixties, it may serve to give you another insight into the mystical German psyche. I found even stronger echoes in the convixions of Frl. Kewitz and her chums, which I will write about anon.

The GYM spent years seeking some great and formative "German" experience. Ten months after the Kaiser unveiled the statue at Leipzig, they found their "German" experience in the trenches of the Kaiser's War. That war also served as the graveyard of their prophet Langemarck's idealism. And in spite of the new modes of dress and stylistic rhetoric and social permissiveness as exhibitionism among the youth of modern Germany, one can easily recognize the underlying trappings and futility of the ongoing *deutsche Volkegeminschaft* - the national community held together by a 'folk' mystique subordinate to the State.

* * *

As an aside: it was the Saxon poet, Theodor Körner, while a member of the *Freikorp Lützow* who selected the colours for their uniforms, as well as designing it. In Berlin, many an heated debate went on over the colours for a flag to symbolize Imperial Germany, and eventually it was the colours selected by Körner - red, black, gold - that won out. During the latter days of the debate, Bismarck is alleged to have waved aside the question of a national flag, saying the people could fly a rag, as far as he was concerned - he'd still run the country.

Many of Körner's poems were set to music, were very popular, and are still being sung today in East Germany. Even Göebbels quoted Körner in his 'Total War' speech in Berlin 130 years later...

The city-state mentality that has characterized the German psyche since the days of Otto-the-Great still stalks the land. The city of Düsseldorf is the State capital; Cologne has always resented it, feeling it should have been selected. Today, Düsseldorf footballers have a great deal of trouble trying to find hotel rooms in Cologne when they come down the river to play against Cologne footballers.....how is that for veneration of the past?

You cannot systemize nationalism without the risk of ultimately creating a monolithic, immovable social structure, and a circumscribed socio-political mentality - as was demonstrated by Herder and Hegel 150 years ago, and is manifest in all Communist countries today.

German nationalism since Herder, Fichte, Arndt (who was a Swede), Steffen, Schleirmacher has been the result of *political* romanticism, not an aesthetique. Thus German nationalism has always been German ideology, regardless of what name-changes it may have endured. And yet, history of man has shown that ideological bondage can only result in spiritual captivity. The modern German ideological landscape is littered with many of the same elements as the U.S. marketplace - acceptance of substitutes for the real thing and synthetic copies accepted for what they are not.

German history is a history leading from illusion to obsession - a kind of rhapsody of irrationalism that actually began with Luther and his fertile and complex mythology, not, as some would hold, in Teutonic days before Charlemagne. In absence of a firmly rooted, specifically German-developed political theory (which democracy is not) the German of today falls back on the only major tradition left - the German version of the Christian religion. Liberty for the individual is thus obtainable within the national community as both an immutable article of faith and as an abstraction! Herder has finally triumphed...

And yet, when all the bells of Cologne ring out, the city never listens.....

* * *

The Germans are unique in the ardour with which they pursue ideas and attempt to transform them into realities. They cherish a hopeless passion for the absolute, under whatever guise they imagine it. This is a dangerous idealism, and it was Goethe who said that the ideal and reality must be kept strictly apart. And it was Nietzsche who said that the State and civilization were natural antagonists.

The manifestations of the modern German psyche can only be comprehended in terms of its origin, which was what is called the German classical movement 200 years ago, with its backward-gazing eyes focussed on a Greece that never was on land or sea. Where other races may, on occasion, be the victims of historical circumstances, the Germans as a whole have always been the victim of and at the mercy of their own *ideas*.

This strange defenselessness has set its seal upon their literature with its prolonged periods of slavish imitation of foreign writers, its unbalanced enthusiasms, its helpless subjection to catch-words, fashions, and aesthetic theories. And it might be noted that Germany has always produced more poets than any other country. And while the general run of poets create their own vision of life, German poets have always sought their inspiration from German philosophy!

Goethe and Spinoza, Schiller and Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Wagner and Nietzsche and Schopenhauer - German poets have always stood on the shoulders of their philosophers in order to get a view of the world - seeking for *Absolute* beauty in the realm of *Absolute* truth. Luther's darkly brooding mind deemed Truth more important than Beauty; thus the Renaissance barely touched the Germans, save as a religious reformation.

By depriving Germans of their Roman Catholicism, Luther took from them a system which had nourished their mysticism and ministered to their sense of beauty, while at the same time *commanding* their belief. His greatest contribution was, of course, to science and philosophy - a certain previously unknown freedom of thought. But the nascent German aesthetic experience suffered grievously, as what Luther left German men of letters was a skepticism that was barren of beauty and quite lacking in mystical profundity. In a sense, he forced all poets to become philosophers in order to be read at all. It was Luther's Freedom Of Thought thesis that precipitated the Thirty-Year War...

* * *

The literary labours of 17th-century Germany were of incredible emotional aridity, highly-flavoured eroticism, ingeniousness, virtuosity, over-laden forms, dry-as-dust content, stone-cold verse, grotesque prose, mountainous knowledge, and mouse-like wisdom.

* * *

It is the historical literature of any race that reveals the genesis of its psyche, and German literature was produced in a veritable niagara, and still is, and it's all amazingly consistent.

The great rebirth of distinct and sturdy national characteristics occurred in the first half of the 18th-century, when reason and taste, imagination and the miraculous returned to German poetry via Klopstock, Gottsched and Badmer, Breitinger, and, of course, the "absolute standard of beauty" discovered by Winklemann among the Greeks of old. The tyranny of Greece over Germany's aesthetic experience is still patently obvious today.

If the Greek ideal that Winklemann, despite Lessing's reasonable and lucid literary destruction of Winklemann's premise, forced upon the German aesthetic experience from the beginning of the 18th-century was in truth tyrannical, the result was to make of her artists predestined slaves to an idea! Greece influenced every Western country in most every aspect of its civilization, but in Germany we find her triumphant *spiritual* tyranny.

Germans have imitated the Greeks more slavishly, have been obsessed by them more utterly, and have assimilated them less than any other race, all because of a man named Winklemann - a man given to fruitless loves and sterile passions, on whom no other human being was essentially dependent for sympathy or love.

However, it must be admitted that Winklemann's real contribution was his conception of Art as an organic growth, inseparable from racial, climatic, social and political conditions. This is one of the paramount achievements of the Western mind.

As for Lessing - all of his life, intellectually and morally, he was pitted against pygmies, and could hardly move a muscle without attracting a shower of poisoned darts from lesser men. The Lilliputians did not get off scot -free, and there is some comfort in that.

A marked feature of the German classical movement may be found in this: Winklemann rhapsodised about Greece, yet he stubbornly refused to visit it; Lessing theorized intrepidly about Art without attempting to look at it! It is also interesting to note that Goethe shared an abstract affection for Greece, but when given the opportunity to visit it, he refused. *The idea and the reality should never come together*, he said.

The modern German psyche may be epitomized thusly: there seems always to be a haunting, a rather wistful sense of something lost to be regained, than the desire of discovering anything new. Great fixed ideas are apt to isolate their victims, sterili ing the heart while fertili sing the mind. In a very real sense, we may say that the German aesthetic experience has always been impelled by a dynamic instinct whose direction was at fault.

The Hungarian literary critic, George Lukacs, has made many a shrewd observation on the social attitudes and literary produce of German writers of the 19th-century, the century that contains the Mendelian seeds of modern Germany. While his theme is biased and blatantly filled with all manner of Marxist polemics, his major contribution - *Deutsche Ralisten des 19. Jahr Hunderts* - (German Realism in the 19th-Century) - he makes a good point when he refers to the work of Gottfried Keller as works that reveal "what German literature could have become, if the 1848 Revolution had succeeded. This would have meant the victory over the ideological diseases of the German mind and with it, of German literature".

On several visits to Cologne I sought a work by Keller, any work, but failed to find even an awareness in the many book-stalls that are sprinkled around the city.

* * *

"Escape into *Innerlichkeit!* is a phrase frequently used by non-German writers to describe the markedly philistine and generally uninspiring characteristics of German literature of the last century. The almost instinctive demand for *Innerlichkeit* literature has only, within our own time, begun to decline. But even the popular contemporary novels by one Günter Grass echo the historically typical introvert reaction of *Innerlichkeit*.

The tradition of *Innerlichkeit* is rooted in the 17th-century's pietism. It found a vigourous if amorphous expression in the subsequent German Youth Movement - a movement utterly without parallel in any other Western country, of which the *Freikorp* of the Weimar Republic and the destructive Hitler Youth Movement provide prime examples.

To accomplish really significant feats, a man or a nation needs integrity of character. He must know himself and be conscious of his aims - and his limitations! - sternly avoiding those compromises and conflicts which maim and disintegrate the Self. *Innerlichkeit*, incidentally, roughly translates as "inward turning".

* * *

Had there been no Hegel, there would have been no Marx, and in consequence, we would not have today the conflicts of ideology in which we are all mired.

Hegel's tedious, dense, coldly impersonal *Philosophy of History* ranks with Fichte's equally tedious nineteen *Addresses to the German Nation* with their violent racism and strident nationalism. Fichte can be considered as the direct father of Hitler's Nazism, while Hegel, as "secretary of the Absolute", created the prison in which the modern German psyche rigidly wanders along prescribed by-ways of thought.

The modern German belief in his ability to function as an aspect only of an Absolute began with Hegel. As Aiken has written:

> *"Any human being, for Hegel, becomes a person only in so far as he gives up his claim to any individual uniqueness, and is content to be regarded simply as an aspect of the large social whole to which he belongs."*

Concurrent with Hegel, of course, were the works and concepts of Herder, Clausewitz, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, *et. al.*, creating and given an unnatural immediacy by the Napoleonic conquest of Germany, a socio-psychological amalgam that spread like black-strap molasses over the German psyche down to the present day, fixing it like a fly in amber.

As an aside, I might mention that Marx tried several times to use Cologne as a base of operations, and each time he was hounded by the secret police, and each time he had to flee in the night. In talking with students of the University Of Cologne, or, rather, listening to them, one does not hear the name of Marx as frequently as one hears the word 'socialism'. But, then, one must always remember that when a German uses the word whether East or West, he is using it in a very narrow connotation; this obviously makes for a difficulty of communication for someone not reared in the social mileu noted chiefly for its citizens wearing blinders. They also confuse reality with the absolute, I noted, using the two words as though they were interchangeable; and when you try to elicit from them a precise definition of just what they mean, they become vague and oddly annoyed with one's questions.

The patent contradictions inherent in Hegel's philosophy - and his whole philosophy is an attempt to prove such contradiction does not exist - turns on the paradoxical combination of outward subservience to the State, or society, and inner spiritual freedom - the latter best exemplified in the works of Goethe and Leibniz. Hegel said that conformity to institutionalized duties imposed by the State, or society, was an aspect of self-culture, and "self-culture" is a distinctly German phenomenon, I've observed.

The results are apparent in Germany today - the dead weight of accumulated social morés and tribal tabus, and abiding rules of conduct or thought which no longer serve the underlying functions for which they were originally formulated. And another contradiction is apparent in Hegel's glorification of the Prussian State, much admired by Bismarck, with his insistence upon human freedom. To say that from Hegel and Fichte onward, Germans have developed a profoundly bureaucratic mentality is to belabour the obvious.

Cologne is actually more cosmopolitan than Hamburg, and is thus the better social laboratory for modern enquirers, I feel.

* * *

What has been historically referred to as the Old Order of Europe was established at the Congress of Wien in 1815, after the defeat of Napoleon. The Order comprised Austria, Germany, and Prussia, and was dominated by the Austrian Chancellor Metternich...who wans't an Austrian at all. The Order was rigid and authoritarian, still predicated upon the society of the estate-aristocracy. The emergence of Bismark was several decades away and the citizenry of Cologne of the period were described by one English traveller as having a total lack of principle, a gross love of pleasure, where many men and women threw away their honour and virtue for material gain. A rather biting indictment, even for a pre-Elizabethean Englishman. He was writing abour the estate-aristocracy, of course, not the incipient middle-classes.

From 1815 until the 13th of March, 1848 (which was a Monday, incidentally, just as the Easter Rising of the Irish in 1916 was on a Monday) a distinct middle-class was emerging in Cologne that, while still dominated by the estate-aristocracy, was beginning to evolve a kind of political liberalism and a comfortable artistic Romanticism and bourgeois economic values, based on metal money. The social literature of the times, and there was a welter of such, referred to this class as *Biedermeir*.

It is an interesting word, as a finite definition cannot be found. Even German dictionaries offer varying definitions, and, also, while the word is common coinage all over Germany, depending upon what area of Germany you are in, the meaning could be distinctly regional. The origin of the word, however, was given to be by the Countess von Gneisenau and goes like this: The name stemmed from a figure drawn in a humouristic magazine of the period, depicting a bourgeois, a narrow-minded citizen, common-place. The bourgeoisie had arrived at a material level close to the adored aristocracy by accumulating things - *i.e.*, furniture, knick-knacks, table-cloths, silverware, etc. The *Biedermeir* expressed itself in clothes, furniture, architecture, imitated manners. A *"thoroughly middle-class citizenry"* - and that's exactly it.

In brief, a solid, stolid citizenry, upright, materialistic, smug - the backbone of the failed 1848 Revolution. The Revolution actually started in Vienna, swept through Buda-Pest to Cracow, Prague, Warsaw, Berlin - and Cologne. The numerous craft-guilds of Cologne were quite active in the abortive revolution.

While social and political revolutions were quite fashionable all over Europe during the 19th century, the revolution in Germany had a character all its own. Aside from the traditional revolutionary demands for social and political liberalism, emotional regional appeals were tacked onto such demands, and they varied from Saxony to Pomerania to Westphalia. Oddly enough, when Metternich resigned, an immediate orgy of reform swept all Germany.

In writing of Cologne in the 1860s, another English traveller

wrote as follows:

> *"The hausfrau of Coeln lacks the refined grace, the conversational gifts, the lightness of touch of the Parisienne. Instead, she has a meticulous sense and a diligent ingenuity anent the possessions in her home - a lover of order, impervious to good taste. She knows how to sew and cook and bear children, but she is not gifted in the art of pleasing men..."*

One is reminded, of course, of Bismark's subsequent dictum, that the primary concern of good German women should be Church, Children, and Kitchen. One will find an echo of such a sentiment in modern Cologne.

The craft-guilds have been mentioned: they were the forerunners of our trade-unions, and many of the programmes instigated by such guilds are still with us, in one form or another among labour unions here. After the 1848 revolution, in the euphoria of the false belief that social reforms had actually been won from the estate-caste, the workers of Cologne staged a massive carnival. The event was epitomized by a contemporary artist for a picture-postcard, and a reproduction of the card will be found elsewhere in this work. Today, of course, we are all familiar with the "beer-busts", annual picnics, and such, staged by labour unions - and all are direct descendents from the guild workers' carnival in Köln.

I might mention, *en passant*, that the workers of Cologne attended the carnival in costumes that imitated those of the very class they felt they had intimidated - gowns and head-dresses, doublets and velvet pantaloons, gaily coloured stockings, etc. There had to be a certain grotesquery about it all, of course, just as there was an obvious grotesquery about the actions of the French peasantry when they stormed the Bastille. There, in Paris, they raided the shops; street-walkers dressed-up in silks and street-sweepers donned fancy court-dress, all parading through the dirty taverns and stinking streets. There is something to be said for Mendel's Laws of Heredity, even unto the fourth generation.....Darwin to the contrary, not-with-standing.

The persistent German sense of difference, of destiny, evolved from the morbid exclusivity inherent in blind obedience to - of all things - the rules of etiquette as traditionally defined by the estate-aristicracy! This has never occurred in any other country. I have met Germans, of course, who feel such a sense sprang from an innate racial superiority, but, then, I've also met Americans who believed in the American myth as defined by Boorstin.

* * *

The particular theory of egotism (as opposed to 'egoism',

which is indigenous to all men) that conjures specious Ideals turns on an obsessive interest in oneself, in the medium of thought rather than in objectivity - *i.e.*, the world as it is. It is a cerebral game that permits the participant to have a *sense* of being fruitfully occupied, even though he is actually doing nothing. It is a game the German psyche has raised to the level of an high art, and the average modern German would be appalled at the mere idea of cheating at the game he invented.

German egotism manifests itself inthe fixed belief that nothing has any value or even existence unless it fits in with his purpose, however amorphous that purpose may be. This has led, inevitably, to actions without consideration for others, the human values mankind has in common - without genuine and sincere common courtest, and above all, without understanding. He will always insist that *his Idea* of all that is external to him is the reality of it, and that others may have only those rights he wishes to assign to them. He is thus at once officious, rude...and historically mistaken.

While there is some debate as to whether German egotism was created by German Idealism, or the other way round, it is generally agreed that German Ideals exude great passions. But unlike idealism as articulated by other races, German Idealism has become an inflexible system that permits of no rebuke. It is really a very solemn and an arduous business, and contrary to the artificial gaity of German night-life, entertainment, the wordy protestations anent the aesthetic experience, etc., one rarely encounters a truly gay and gleeful German. Yet he will go on insisting that he has strong passions...

To protest so vehemently of strong passions is to tacitly suggest that there is actually very little passion there - methinks he doth protest too much, as Billy-Of-Avon once wrote. Yet all German philosophy, and it might be worth noting that all German philosophy was created in the last century, preaches the need for strong passions. Intelligent men have always grown to see the folly of passions, but to the German, his passions remain muffled, diffused into sickly and sentimental sensuality; or else have been hardened into passionate German Maxims! Sentimentality has always marked the absence of passion, hence Germans still their passions as *Duties*, their cupidity for Ideals.

Nothing can ruffle the autonomous conscience of German Idealism (Hitler's War was but the latest historical indice), and he who abides such may have the grossest of natures, but as long as his life is busy, conventional, and sprinkled with daily self-congratulations on all he knows and does and thinks, he is at ease with himself.

German Idealism, then, is a whole, self-contained transcendental philosophy that is ultimately false. It has always been and is a purely private perspective of life peculiar to the German psyche. Such

Idealism, bred in a peculiar egotism, has always been a vice because it was founded upon a psychological mistake. As Robespierre said:

"It is worse than a crime! - it is a mistake!"

* * *

The seeming moral degeneracy under the Weimar Republic was not historically significantly different from Wilhelmine Germany, or during the time of any of the Fredericks. It was simply more accessable to the mushrooming world media, and "news" still has no standard or global or social definition. The commercialised perversions of the German caberets and wanton displays of what Kraft-Ebing (an Austrian) called *Psycholpathia Sexualis* was, for many foreigners, the sum of German society. The sociological causes had to await other times and other writers. But this was a facet, not the whole; just as the so-called Roaring Twenties in the U.S. reflected a facet, and a rather small one at that, of American society - which, like German society of the Twenties, lent itself easily to media-exploutation.

The prophet of the perversity noted so smirkingly in foreign media was a man named Max Stirner. His credo was that Germans should worship nothing, merely enjoy themselves sensually - a forerunner of Hitler's "Strength Through Joy!". This certainly was not a new proclamation in terms of German philosophy, but the socio-polotical conditions of the times gave it a certain facile fascination for immature minds and empty stomachs, just as Communism exerted a facile fascination for intellectually immature minds here during the Depression. And Stirner and his ilk proved to be but another example of Germans misreading human nature.

They were never wrong, throughout their history, to propose Ideals, for that is noble and heroic. Their error has always been in defining those Ideals so arbitrarily and then imposing those definitions as *Absolutes!* The historical flaw, you see, in the German psyche. All such German posits have always overlooked the fact that man lives by exercising imagination and individual will in the art of living, that the objective of this art is impersonal, and adeptness in this art affords one a *natural* human happiness.

Germans I've met over the years, both in Germany and in other countries, have always struck me as being by nature good and solid people. Only their moralists, of whatever stripe, have been so fantastic-ly bad. Yet human nature remains a *mystery* - to Germans. They have yet to decipher it as an endowment that is multi-facetted, flexible, and non-willable. Since Herder and Hegel and Fichte Germans have always been forced to have a go at life with monolithic attitude towards an abstraction - *Volk* - and that attitude remains an Absolute.

They still seem unable to sufficiently respect the external conditions under which all human nature operates, and to which it must conform - the world around us, the rights of other men, God. To terminate in an Ideal as an Absolute expression of *élan vital* results in a mysticism that renounces all moral judgements. A reasonable morality terminates in the plastic arts, by which ideals and passions are compounded with experience and reality. Thus the immaturity of German moralists can be seen at every hand in the rigid concept of "the good German life".

* * *

SELF, WILL, EGO, IDEAL, ABSOLUTE...these words have always dominated the history of German philosophy since the middle of the 18th century. In the final analysis, they remain pivotal words for both comprehending and living with the modern German psyche.

Any particular conception predicated upon such words involves an equally particular conception of the world, its stuff and structure, on the one hand; and a doctrine of society and distinctly private moral viewpoint. This is especially true the nonce when modern social stresses have isolated - in fact, have besieged via the banality of television - the individual mind, and blurred the eternal problem of how that mind can learn anything about itself.

For the exercise of Will, as defined by Hegel, the German nation was created, and with the departure of all things German, the meaninglessness of this world would disappear. No other concept has been so popular with the German psyche - or so bold and insolent before the brooding face of cosmic reality.

Maritain, albeit scornfully, said it:

"In the presence of Luther and his doctrines, we are present at the Advent Of Self!"

Since Luther Germans have operated with few pre-suppositions, quite devoid of Montague's incorrigible curiosity ot affirmative skepticism anent the msytery of Self. Luther defined it - *ergo!* - that was the end of the matter.

Like a Hamlet or a Macbeth, the German psyche does not reflect a balanced soul consciously facing a clear-cut dilemma, but rather, the turmoil of a mind that does not understand its own impulses and the genesis of its inhibitions - an irresolute mind grasping at cerebral pretexts for an action to which subconscious processes of thought and feeling which were long ago pre-determined. A paragraph by Stracey may not be amiss here:

"...their inconsistency exceeds the limits permitted to man.

Their elements fly off from one another wildly, we sieze them, we struggle hard to shake them into a single, comprehensible compound - and the retort bursts! How is it possible to give a coherent account of their subtlety, their naivete, their delicacy and brutality - their piety, and lust?"

The German Romantics, as Goethe, reacted violently to the Age of Reason, and gave themselves up to the free-flow of emotions, with the inevitable result that their emotions became more and more tyranical, complex, capricious. The German psyche became an immeasurable sea of rioting passions and dark dreams. This is apparent in the aesthetic experience in modern Cologne, I might mention.

Kant was awakened from his dogmatic slumbers by Hume, and, unfortunately, his negativism became more popular than his positivism. Schopenhauer completed muddying the waters of German ideology and German philosophic Idealism. He painted the Will in all things as blind, brutish, insatiable. Echoing the insights of Gotama, he insisted that individuality was an illusion of the intellect, a atttered veil hiding and infinite and restless reality. Unknowingly - perhaps - he added a monstrous weight to the mystical concept of *Volk*, and the individual subservient to the State.

Goethe was a big man with an enormous head. When he walked, according to contemporaries, he carried his body like a banner on parade, looking neither to the right nor the left. German Idealism is much like Goethe walking - high held and stiffly, looking neither to the right nor the left at reality.

* * *

If Japan is the only country that ever defeated Democracy by adopting it wholesale, modern Germany has accepted Democracy by wearing it like a top-coat draped over its arm, carried everywhere, always on display...while continuing to go about its business in the historical German way. It is a thought to contemplate, what?

* * *

The German psyche has beheld *Erdgeist*...and has refused to turn away.....

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her job, nor how obsessed with it she apparently is, for to perform as efficiently and as consistently as she does - which obviously bespeaks a striking self-discipline, dedication, purpose - does reach a point at which the initial concentration would have established and thereafter maintain the ongoing momentum of such requirements. That she has not married also opens up other questions, which one hesitates to pursue. I have seen her in action, as we say, on the job, and I have also seen her in after-dark social situations. While in the latter she is gregarious and at ease and seems to fit in easily with the mood of the moment and people she is with, one may still detect an aura of inflexible self-control or inner discipline that mars the view.

I, myself, have never been put off by her self-contained manner, such as I have heard remarked on by other journalists who came into contact with her, but I've long been aware that she is ill at ease in trying to pigeon-hole me into types she is familiar with. It has made for a dégagé association over the years, which I can smile about.

She is a native of Cologne. She likes to read or hear all laudatory comments about her city, from any source, and she is close to the principles of the Cologne Tourist Bureau. I've sometimes wondered if she accepts such comments because they reinforce, without forcing her to think deeply, her innate *feelings* about her city, or whether such comment reassures her emotionally of convixions she was early on exposed to, had never questioned, and which allowed her to go on *feeling* about her city without having to wonder or question the veracity of such comments. And, of course, one cannot put such questions so boldly to one for whom one has an enduring affection.

A couple of times I thought to enquire of Frl. Hoppen her true feelings about Münster in the same vein, as she seems to be much more perceptive anent Münster's socio-political mores than Marianne is anent Cologne's; but I did not press the issue, as it was Cologne, not Münster, that I wanted to make my main frame of reference for this work. However, I did note that the women of Cologne, including Marianne, were much more aware of their city, *per se*, than the men - *i.e.*, its popular history, landmarks, institutions, restaurants and theatres, *usw.*

* * *

It was at one of the usual dinners staged by the Fair principles for the Press. Such affairs are always well attended by the Press, even though many will pass up legitimate press luncheons staged by the exhibitors at Photokina - their alleged purpose for being there in the first place. Perhaps it was because there seems to always be more free booze at a dinner staged by the Fair people.

The people gathered in little knots of animated if banal conversation, glasses waving in the breeze and voices growing louder and

Frl. MARIANNE HOLLMANN

von Köln

Pathological neuroticism has become the hall-mark of our times. We are all neurotic, to one degree or another; it's a matter of adjustment with the least amount of private risk.

When first we met, I thought Frl. Hollmann was an anachronism. Later on, I realised that she was an archtype of the 19th-century middle-class German, and as such, interested me very much. She is the Senior Foreign Press Officer of the Cologne Trade-Fair Company, a position she is obsessively devoted to and which will keep her at her desk late into the night when all others have gone.

Others in similar positions have been known to exhibit devotion to duty, efficient application of talents, dedication to one's role, and blind loyalty to one's "principles". But with Marianne all these traits are heroic, larger than life, abnormal - and awesome. I once tried to say all this to her, but she really didn't comprehend my words, which was to be expected. God, in His infinite wisdom, gave each of us a blind spot, so that we cannot see ourselves as others see us. If we could, we'd all probably blow our brains out.

Frl. Hollmann actually does not realize just how good she is at

louder. There has never been anything very interesting about such conventional gatherings, wherever they may occur, and certainly there is never anything photogenic.

There was one rather vulgar character who should be commented on. He was an American from one of the New York based amateur photographic magazines. His name is unimportant as he was atypical of that type. It was his first trip to Cologne and his first Photokina. He was big and fat and his three-piece suit was grossly ill-fitting. An expanse of rumpled shirt showed between the bottom of his vest and his trousers. He talked loudly and waved a big cigar around in one hand, while slopping a drink in the other.

Marianne was a member of that captive little group, and it was she to whom he directed his boorish attentions. He spoke of how he loved Cologne and how he loved the German people and the food and the Fair. He kept pestering Marianne with repetitious questions on how he could get a job in Cologne, whom should he contact, he wanted to settle in Cologne, he was in love with the German people and food and the Fair, *ad infinitum, ad nauseum*.

Marianne listened with her typical controlled civility, and now and then, when he would pause to puff on his dead cigar or swill from his glass, she would say that he really didn't want to move to Germany, that he would not be happy there, that there was much unemployment in Cologne, and such like. Needless to say, the amateur magazine "journalist" ignored her words and kept on talking.

A little while later, in the dining room when we were all being seated, he tried to get a chair next to her, but she adroitly managed to have a friend displace him. He wandered aimlessly then across the room, finally going out the door, apparently having forgotten completely the reason why he was there.

Such characters are not that exceptional during any Photokina, and one must be awed by the fact, with all its physchological implications, that during the last Fair Marianne and her crew contended with more than 4,000 foreign journalists from 74 countries - and with it all, she remained her controlled and imperturbable self. This has always impressed me, yet she thinks of it only as her "duty"...

* * *

For a long time I saw Marianne only in slacks, usually grey wool with wide cuffs. And in all her clothes she seemed to favour earth-colours. When first we met she wore her hair long, which is still a woman's crowning glory, if it is not straight and stringy and parted carelessly in the middle. Over the years Marianne's hair reflected the mode, and now she wears it short and trimmed. I prefer the original style, as

it was much more feminine, from a male point of view.

And then one day I say Marianne in a dress for the first and only time. It was a greyish wool in one piece with an integral scarf thrown around her neck. I confess that for a moment I only stared, and when I mentioned it was the first time I'd seen her in a dress, she laughed. But when I asked why the bloody boots, she seemed confused. A couple of our subsequent meetings found her in a dress or suit, all favouring earth-colours - nothing vivid or splashing or bright.

There is a psychology of colours hung down from the Middle Ages pertaining to a penchant for earth-colours, but I always hesitated to bring this up with Marianne, as I might have risked a wholly unnecessary misunderstanding, and I have too much affection for this young lady.

* * *

I suppose the fascination of Marianne lies in a simple fact - her intense dedication to her work, her magnificent self-control under pressure, her constant objectivity as to what is best for the Fair Company, her limited social life - yet being feminine with it all. All such subjective attributes reminded me of my own mispent youth, when I was obsessed with unlocking the secret of the Verb. That is not to suggest that we share anything in common, save being alive in the same lifetime, as I am old enough to be her father. But I found it strangely re-assuring to encounter her kind of forward-flinging obsessiveness in this day and age, and in one so young.

Life, to be meaningful, is always a forward-flinging operation. One lives *toward* the future, the unlived tomorrow, because to live is to be *doing! Im Anfang war die Tat*...and after the act is continuation, a survival into the moment after. Life, then, suffers under an inevitable imperative of realisation, and this is secured by *doing*. Marianne Hollmann, in her circumscribed personal world, is constantly borrowing from her future with an intensity that moves one to awe.

* * *

Moment of Transition

ON MEETING D.H.MOORE

douglas g. yule

D.H. has been referenced as an arrogant bastard, a Victorian social snob, an abrasive character - and other affectionate terms of endearment by lesser men - and women.

He has also been called a universal mind, a renaissance man, a monstrous intellect.

I have also known those who, in both personal and professional association, have speak with sincerity of his great generosity, warmth, charm, and unobtrusive humanity.

Is there a correct view?

All such views could be correct if we accept that every man has been fashioned in God's image and sadsled with a terrible responsibility known as Free-Will, is a many-facetted creature and perceptivity in regrad to another human being is always a mattered degree that turns on education, breeding, culture.

I decided to write this quite inconclusive piece out of sympathy for those who have never met D.H. or heard him speak, nor been exposed to the plethora of his professional writings scattered in many media of many disciplines.

My decision to write this piece came about after reada mass of letters from readers of his writings - I forget just the magazine - who had never met him. It was quite obvious that a majority were trying to fit the argent character of D.H. into pigeonholes of conventional or hackneyed types, and were frustrated.

I hope to bring all such persons a sense of his enormous array of knowledge, his high standards and critical judgement, his Keltic wit, and his amazing way with words, all of which must be taken into account when assaying the man. In short, the sense of a man I've long though of as the most fascinating human character I've ever known.

This item may also serve as a reminder that in this world of two-dimensional, cardboard characters reflecting each other's and their own shallowness of personality and purpose, full-fleshed souls of universal minds, on the order of DeVinci, Goethe, Shakespeare or Yutang, still walk among us, restoring our tattered faith in heroes.

* * *

For years I had resisted the influence of D.H.Moore, via his writings in literary and aesthetic journals, engineering,photographic, scientific, aeronautical trade-media. I even made a point of avoiding him at conventions or seminars, feeling he was always a bit too self-contained, vaguely aloof, much too quiet.

Then fate stepped in, and I was trapped.

The place was Anaheim, a PPA convention and trade-show. I could not, with good grace, decline a particular invitation to join a certain group for dinner, to be followed by the inevitable bull-session that always occurs among people of like interests. I recall I deliberately selected a chair farthest from D.H.

He sat at the head of the table in casual authority, always impeccably dressed, speaking little, but one sensed that he was acutely aware of everything that was going on. I felt I should have been annoyed by this observation, but could not sustain the feeling.

And suddenyl I realised that his poise and pose and place at the head of the table was somehow right and proper. This bothered me, on the one hand; and was vaguely exciting, on the other.

The usual indecisive arguments turning on the usual unresolvable propositions floated back and forth around the table. After one rather tedious and pointless such argument, someone turned to D. H. and asked him who was right. With no change in attitude or in expression, D.H. very quietly said:

"Neither one of you know what you're talking about."

His words immediately rivetted our collective attention.

I could feel an instinctive animosity rising on all sides and especially from the few women present. D.H. has always seemed to have an odd effect on women, I have noticed. Some become immediately and strangely defensive in his presence, even though they were never challenged on any aspect of their being. On the other hand, there is a woman or two I know who were quite in love with him.

But to return to the sudden silence that engulfed us all.

D.H. began to talk, unemotionally, incisively, authoritatively. He took both sides of the previous argument and proceeded to inexorably destroy both premises with facts, figures, anecdotes, and bits of ironical humour. He documented his comments with all manner of respectable references - it was devastating. And the silence that now enveloped the table was thick and rapt.

He talked relentlessly, never repeating himself, never at a loss for the exact word or thought. I could feel the initial animosity beginning to evapourate from those around me, to be replaced a bit at a time with wonder and an odd sense of awe. Someone even took out a tape-recorder and turned the microphone towards D.H.

It got to me, too.

His words, logic, authority, power of mind reached all around the table, and caught me by the short hairs on the nape of my neck. He has infinite powers of projection, when he is so minded, or when his ironical sense of Keltic humour is on him. The upshot from the encounter at Anaheim was that I've been a devoted champion of D. H. ever since.

He is a man of presence, passion, dramatic accomplishment and a spell-binder when he so wishes. And there in his ambience I at long last finally understood why this strange, and truly remarkable mancould arouse such violent jealousies bordering upon hatred on the one hand; and arouse so much loyalty and devotion, on the other. Today, I count my life as enriched to be among the latter group.

Meeting D.H. face to face was a shattering, and meaningful experience. Happily I was capable of opening my mind in his presence. I've always regretted since then those years wasted in having having so carelessly accepted the shallow judgement of lesser minds. I also can understand now D.H.'s off-hand contempt for poseurs.

In an age of intellectual pygmies and third-rate talents - D.H. walks among us as a giant.

* * *
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(1963) D.H. MOORE

THERE ARE NO ABSOLUTES!

Since 1815 Germans have been obsessed by the convixion that as Germans they have a destiny unique in all the world.

This was and is an *absolute* convixion, and can be observed in social and commercial intercourse amid the citizens of Cologne, Düsseldorf, Berlin, Frankfurt-am-Main, Bonn, Hamburg, *usw*.

It is a double tragedy, actually, in that they still believe they can choose and affect a German destiny. The original tragedy, of course, is in the immutable fact that destiny of an individual or a nation is precisely *that which cannot be chosen!*

If you have read this far in this *dégagé* volume, you probably realize by now that I have been unduly (perhaps) naïve in my ideas of Germans. Because I do not know them well, as one would know well the people of one's native land, everything about them, with Cologne serving as a true microcosm, presents itself to me as a problem in ineffable fascination. I am puzzled by even the smallest detail and manifestation of the German psyche. Most of all, I suppose, I am most fascinated by the historical German imperative operating today - Germans living lives contrary to their *vocation* - a perpetual and obsessive compulsion to be perpetually untrue to their real destiny.

Because of the carelessness that has infected language today, perhaps a definition of terms would be in order here, as without them, we run the risk of a breakdown in genuine communication.

We all possess to a fixed degree freedom of will with respect to our Self and our "destiny"; we can exercise that freedom of will not to realize either, thus becoming untrue to ourselves - living a life, in other words, devoid of any authenticity. *Vocation*, then, in the philosophical sense, which is our sense, implies an integral and individual program or pattern of existence. *Destiny*, being external, is happenstance, external circumstances over which we have no individual control or influence. Thus no-one can actually "have a destiny" to fulfill.

The tragedy of the German psyche is that it has tried for nearly

200 years to supplant itself with externally imposed *ideas* - to falsify itself, in other words, in the real world; going about seeking *things* and intellectually idealised situations to validify those ideas, which the German still calls 'ideals'. This is, obviously, a negation of all that we mean by the expression *élan vital*, for, again, amid the most severe security of Self, Germans still cry:

"So still u. so sinnig!
Es fahlt dir was, Gesteh es frei."

"Zu feriden bin ich,
Aber mir ist nicht wohl dabei."

"So silent and thoughtful! - you lack something, admit it."
"I am content, but being content does not put me at ease."

Ewiges Schwanken is an apt phrase for the perennial vacillation one finds in German friends who remain strangely imprisoned in historically traditional ideas (German ideas) of what they are *vs.* what their history has taught them they ought to be. This has resulted in a dichotomy as a "moral destiny", which they tend to use more as an excuse for past actions than as a defence, and in consequence, such a dichotomy is always open to challenge and dispute - as are all purely intellectual convixions, externally or self-imposed.

* * *

The historical German search for Absolutes began with Herder in the latter half of the 18th-century. It is recorded that it was his resentment of the outcome of Luther's Thirty Years' War and the corruption of the court of Frederick that sent him seeking after a purely German structure in language, letters, art, biology, history, *usw.* His efforts became the basis of that never-ending yearning that has dominated German thought ever since - that sense of loss and inferiority, introspection and longing, that *Sehnsucht* for something that is not and never was.

Herder introduced into Western thought the greatest intellectual revolution, after Luther's Reformation - the historical outlook. It was a most significant contribution of the German mind.

The historical outlook among Germans persists to this day, and has always sharply marked off Germany from the rest of Europe, even though the historical outlook has not remained their exclusive property. The generalizing mode of thought of the West grew out of a belief in a natural law, the ideals of Graeco-Roman civilization, and Hebraic-Christian ethics. Herder's approach was that of individualising an attitude that suggested local and temporal circumstances influenced the individual the nonce only to the degree that such circumstances were echoes from past history.

This was a radical point-of-view, as it denied absolutely the validity of all Western social and moral values.

The poetry and music of Germany has always revealed quite clearly German pre-occupation with substituting feeling for intellect, faith for reason, and man in all the conditions that determine his being. Herder is responsible for this. He created the mood, the national climate, the design and the plan for the building-up of this emotional, nostalgic prison, out of which the German psyche has yet to escape.

Hegel and the Romantic writers worked at Herder's structured way of viewing the world, added to it, altered it here and there, and filled in details. While his predecessors were such men as Hume, Shaftsbury, Montesquieu, Herder added to their thinking with the then-emerging philosophy of Leibniz - one of Germany's greatest thinkers - and the ancestral German yearnings of mysticism. Thus we find that even today the German psyche is haunted by the allurements of historical vistas never seen, by speculation upon all that is abstract and unprovable, and most of all, by illusions of Absolutism.

Herder is correctly regarded as the father of modern nationalism, not only for Germany but also the rest of the Western world.

The concept of the Nation-State, the untapt creative forces of the *Volk*, the union of the individual with the national community - all began with Herder. *(En passant,* it might also be mentioned that aside from giving a new direction to all branches of knowledge, Herder also pleaded for the emancipation of women.) Yet it remains an odd fact of German history that Herder's destiny has been to inspire and influence others rather than to be recognized as the genius he thought he was - those who came under his influence are today names in all the German history and literary books, as well as text-books on politics.

In 1828 Goethe, his most prominent disciple, wrote:

> *"Ein vor fünfzig in Deutschland entsprungenes Werk, welches unglaublich auf die Bildung der Nation eingewirkt hat und nun, da es seine Schuldigkeit getan, so gut wie vergessen ist."*

> "A work that was produced 50 years ago in Germany, and has had an incredible effect upon the culture of the nation, and, now that it has fulfilled its duty, is as good as forgotten."

In other words, the precepts, principles, inward-turning *Volk und Stadt* mystique that Herder had created had become so permeated throughout all of Germany that the backward-turning psyche of the German mind had become taken for granted, as something indigenous to being German. Those precepts, principles, and inward-turning pre-occupation are still with us.

Pursuit of a non-existent Absolute, consciously or unconciously, is a symptom of excessive pedantry and inordinate Self-assertion, an esoteric doctrine that well expresses the German spirit, then and now.

* * *

It should also be noted that lack of recognition during his lifetime tended to make Herder a rather bitter man, which all his priestly protestations could not alleviate. In him, *Weltschmerz* and history lived in an uneasy alliance. Even in his own time his reputation was over-shadowed by contemporaries - Lessing, Young, Winklemann, Harmann, Möser, etc.

But he endured and became the inventor of the art of literature as we know it today. He, not Luther, introduced the idea that Germany could create its own poetic literature with a German language suitable to that literature, and not imitations of foreign literature, chiefly French and English.

The language, too, of modern Germany owes much to Herder's concern for it. Klopstock was inspired to give it new emotional expression, Lessing created a lucid vehicle for critical and dramatic work, Wolff introduced a philosophical German language, and because of Herder they combined to break the chains of foreign literary influence.

What has all this to do with the German obsession for Absolutes? Mainly this: it all began with Herder and his inspiration of what may be termed the Made-In-Germany mentality; he created the structure for a purely German psyche (that the structure was and is a prison was apparently not even suspected at the time); he led the fight against foreign structures.

It was Herder who evoked the idea of a nation, the *Volk*, the creative personality, and the concept of historical continuity. However, while charging his age with degeneracy, he unknowingly initiated a crisis for the German psyche that remains to this day - *e.g.*, he brought *Sehnsucht*, *Weltschmerz*, emotionalism, irrationalism, Romanticism to the forefront of German thought. His attempts to reconcile the German yearnings for Absolutes at all levels of human endeavours obviously failed, and his failure is manifest on every hand in modern Germany.

Lessing's hard-headed rationalism and Tieck's fusion of dream and reality met in Herder as tenuous amalgam, never really pinned down.

In essence, the *Volk* concept, the true basis of the German dilemma, was and is that if you surrendered your private interests to those of the State, you automatically became a good and important person, and, by extension, a happy one. You are then able to believe that the world shares your thinking and renders them perpetual; while you, absorbed in your pursuit of the German Ideal, forget your private morality. By drugging

yourself with the ritualistic routine of being German, you will not become aware of the vanity of living. This pathological hygiene of Ideals always stops at some uncriticised impulse. To the average German, the world began in Eden and ended in Berlin...

* * *

Beginning with Hegel and reinforced by Fichte, Germans have created dramatic illusions which they call reason, and Reason is Absolute. The great German fear is that understanding may some day understand that their view of the historical imperative will correct its basic falsities. They are convinced that the reality of others is irrelevant to their own conceptual mythology - more: that other realities do not exist!

To identify egotism with the Absolute is a dialectic that obeys the impulse of a theoretical *parti pris,* and glorifies a *fixed idea*, There is also an egotism of passion which Hegel identified with German Idealism that is dangerous and frequently fatal. In time, such passion became identified with the State. As the passion for the Ideal, the Absolute, became rigid and fixed in the German psyche, it began to usurp the inherent nature of man to where it became a form of fanaticism.

The German psyche, after 200 years of intellectual regimentation, still migrates easily into any political body or non-provable idea. Dazzle him with a sophism or hypnotize him with a superstition, and you need nothing more to turn him into a romantic criminal - *e.g.,* Bismarck and Moltke and Hitler, of course.

But Absolutes require challenges, even if artificially created, to justify themselves. The morally absolute State requires rival States - in order that its separate and different psyche would not seem to vanish under true reason - *i.e.,* reality - and with it the excuse for Blessed Wars for the Fatherland. Only since Hitler's War have Germans paid lip-service to the notion that nations have duties and obligations to each other, regardless of ideology; but Germany still respects legality more than justice, and extant institutions more than moral ideas.

The idol of the Absolute State still receives daily subservience from the modern German, and remains eternally indifferent.....

* * *

PHOTO-JOURNALISM

A CRITICAL COMMENTARY

In the guise of 'investigative reporting' and a specious 'right to know' of people who have never even thought about their 'right to know', the Fourth Estate in all its roles invades privacy, purloins confidential papers, bribes employees to act as informers, editorialise rather than report the news; and seem obsessed with only the uglier aspects of the modern human experience. And when their gross immorality, petty biases, and self-aggrandizement are all exposed from time to time, they cry 'Foul!', and try to hide their depravities behind some fictional right they claim is in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Press-photographers and particularly TV-cameramen (they can hardly be called photographers) seem to delight in visually dramatizing their personal biases and general contempt for their fellowman.

Not too long ago the rhythm of everyman's life was even, constant and disasters and social problems and so-called news-events were quite incidental. When a photograph appeared in news-media, it was an exceptional event that was reported. Today, every day, we drown in a surfeit of instant murder, instant mayhem, instant scandals, instant immorality, instant perverse human conduct. These constantly changing images in all media, printed and electronic, numb us with visual commentaries without substance or significance. So-called Journalism today is a far cry from Hick's original enunciation of Photo-Journalism there in the Thirties.

We are suffocating amid a visually-oriented generation that is becoming increasingly mindless, thanks to electronic images, of which, sad to say, Photography is the root-parent. Johnny can't read, and is encouraged not to care to learn - but he is encouraged to mindlessly follow the single dimensioned images with which he is daily bombarded from the idiot-tube of commercial TV, to attribute synthetic significance to the exploitive images he sees in printed media of all stripe. The ability to read and learn and an authentic desire to know seems to have become an intellectual anachronism today.

Banality and spiritual aridity have become the order of the day

for the controllers of public opinions. If 90% of our daily impression of the world we live in, including our private lives, is so obviously dominated and controlled by manufactured images in steady flux, where is the moral responsibility? - and why are they not held accountable by the people they allegedly are informing?

Three posits may be offered for the current state of photo-journalism (considered these days as more of a generic term):

1. The modern 'cultural' consciousness is a mixture of dope, perverted sex, permissiveness, abdication of paternal responsibility, the pampering of criminals, 'queers', and ignorant splinter-cause groups.

2. Mass meida, and especially TV, have degraded the photographic image to such an extent that *"it would be possible for someone to believe that Photography was only invented for a public consisting of the mentally retarded!" (*)*

3. Modern -hotographers cannot or will not acknowledge that their hardware simply is not sufficient, and that the hardware syndrome gets in the way of Photography's basis role, which is essentially sociological medium and not a pathetic one assessable to everyman as an instrument of socio-political (and petty personal) judgements.

In a very real sense, modern photo-journalist is obsessed with psycholigically compensating or justifying whatever is being reported or depicted exclusively in terms of the so-called reproter or cameraman. That Photography can be used as a medium to affect change for good apparently has never occurred to these self-anointing, self-proclaimed judges of our 'right to know'.

It follows that the individual photo-journalist's and TV 'reporter's' private biases, prejudices, obstinancy, and all too frequently his photographic incompetence will always show up in his work. And there are those who even insist that modern photo-journalism is a 'cultural' activity! - that they are 'objective' social commentators!

Within living memory Photography used to reflect an intellectual level accepted by everyman as high as that of the written or spoken word of professional writers. It made demarcable socio-spiritual contributions to its own time and place, and the universality of its language was accepted without question. Today, photo-journalism has debased Photography's traditional role in subservience to vested interests of every stripe, seemingly the more perverse, the better, and the display of gross personal vanity on TV screens staggers the mind.

Photo-journalism today has become symptomatic of and has

helped create the moral sickness of the times: it has become the Typhoid Mary of the Western World. While it has not yet reached such a low level in Eastern countries, it is simply a matter of time. Just as the Japanese are the only people who ever defeated Democracy by adopting it, so too have modern media reduced Photography to the level of a moronic social phenomenon, and that is rather sad.

Mass media and TG have murdered and buried without even the common courtesy of a modest wake many social, traditional mores, values, human sensitivities - for dollars, not for glory. Splashing grotesque films or photographs across the country's visual awareness dead bodies, rape victims, dope peddlars, corrupt politicians - or naked bodies flaunting themselves on public beaches, marching 'queers', trade-union intransigence - and all with equal emphasis, and with out proposing any positive resolution, of course, has to be deemed a national social, spiritual, and' cultural *cul-de-sac*.

At the same time, it must be admitted that the select few among modern photo-journalists - those with perception and compassion for the human experience - have to subordinate their talents and feelings to the uncultured, arbitrary, or ego-maniacal tastes and dictates of so-called editors, art-directors, producers, TV 'personalities'.

Since there is nothing artistic about photo-journalism, it follows that it must be the end-product of an active intelligence, wouldn't you say? Wrong. Any intellectual activity on the part of the select photo-journalist is never allowed to show through. His work is degraded and manipulated by editors or producers to make 'deals' which are self-serving. Obviously, this is of no benefit to the photographer.

All that is unimportant and trivial in today's world is dramatized all out of proportion; it sterilizes and de-oderizes and cosmeticises to the poitn of vapidity - the meaningless lives and thoughts of such as TV 'stars', criminals, politicians, football players, sex and perversion, stree-walkers, and, of course, always from a private and ignorant point of view of the editor or producer. Photo-journalism has become, in truth, the opiate of the people - Huxley's *Soma* . Doesn't it all frighten you? - just a little bit?

And then, there are circles within circles for the earnest photo-journalist if he wishes to remain employed. The massive media which has mushroomed around pitching consumer products - their value or merir being of no social consequence, according to editors and producers - is such a circle within a circle. He is caught in a vicious circle that is dominated by illusory images, phoney news, show-bix gimmicks, all of which are designed only to command abrupt, mindless attention for the moment. Every risk of having the unknown reader or viewer exert a little mental effort to make him think, is eliminated in advance by so-called film-editors, picture-editors, story-editors, just plain editors,

picture-editors, story-editors, feature-editors, or just plain editors, or even the copy-boy, all of whom suffer a sick olympian-complex.

Modern photo-journlism is based on immediate but transient visual sensation. And each visual sensation devours the previously experienced one with no mind contact at all. Such sensations have no depth, obviously, and it is this aspect that, because it is daily and hourly exploited by the controllers of our media, is so deadly and destructive to the human potential.

The earnest photo-journalist, then, would appear to have but two choices: he can go along with the nihilistic forces dictating his role in the marketplace from fear of losing his job; or he can restrict his talents and personal photographic vision to me-too arty bits of images to satisfy limp-wristed art-directors or editors.

Either way, he is no longer his own man; he is a drone, not an erg. Individually or collectively, he cannot change the monoloithic and tribial system under which we all suffer.

Only a new breed of editors and producers, qualified, authentic, compassionate, can do that.

"BRASSAI"

His real name is Gyula Halasz. He was born in that very old town in Transylvania known as Brasso, from which he took his public name in Paris, after moving there after the Kaiser's War.

As a youth he studied Art in Buda-Pesht, later in Berlin, as was the fashion at the turn of the century. The War interfered with his studies, and when it was over he naturally drifted into Paris and took up journalism, which was also the fashion among the expatriated men and women seeking the dubious artistic freedom of the Left Bank.

This was around 1924. His interest in Photography did not occur until 1930, and even then it was half-hearted, even for an adopted Frenchman. It must be said that while he lacks the obsessive compulsion of Atget or the superciliousness of Cartier-Bresson, he is the better photographer for his genre.

France has made her share of contributions to Photography, after inventing it. It was the Frenchman who called himself "Nadar" who, in 1848, coined the phrase "decisive moment". The phrase is currently being puffered by our amateur photo-media editors as something made-up by the spoiled brat of Photography, Cartier-Bresson. I mention this here just to set the record straight.

Berenice Abbott's latest book is an over-drawn eulogy to Aget, the other Frenchman who worked in Brassai's genre. Aside from her incredibly sophomoric pitch for Aget's use of "inferior optics" and of how little he knew of Photography, one finds it difficult to wed the reproductions of Aget with Abbott's praise. Her praise of mediocre Photography, I feel, could have served a better purpose, as we all know about Aget.

Considering the state-of-the-art at the time, there was no reason for Aget to use inferior optics. His labours have always reflected a precious amateur who lacked the inner discipline, education, and the spur that seperates the select practitiioner from the me-too variety - the majority, obviously. The uneveness of Aget, both his life and his produce, preclude any sort of critically meaningful photographic judgement, Abbott not-with-standing. The phenomenon of Aget is meaningful to the socio-historian, and little else.

Brassai worked the same genre, but from the advantage he had in education and the artist's instinct for forms in space. The first

collexion of photographs was published in 1933, *Paris de Buit*. It was a thin, pocket-sized book that did not sell very well. What was remarkable, of course, was that after taking up Photography in 1930, his photographs were deemed worthy of publication three years later. This contrasts sharply with those photographers who labour for years and never get into print, although I have observed that vanity-publishing is becoming a vogue among young contemporary photographers who have never done their home-work, nor ever revealed any genuine photographic talent.

By the end of 1933 Brassai's book, which esoteric book, as such of any stripe seem to have the habit of doing, was being reviewed and praised around the world. The Bateford Gallery of London was the first to stage an exhibition of his photographs, and among the visitors was Cecil Beaton. Two more books followed, dealing with Paris and the odd remnants of the so-called Bohemian life of the Left Bank. Then abruptly he ceased, and gave up his 6x9cm Voigtländer *Bergeil* plate-camera, with its f:4.5 *Heliar* lens. It might be mentioned, *en passant*, that both his camera and lens had been invented before the Kaiser's War: thus, Abbott's talk of Aget's inferior optics doesn't wash.

One of the more obvious critical deficiencies in all so-called photographic print-judging for the last decade, has been an almost universal myopia anent judging images in terms of the photographer's time and place. This being true, I anticipate a sudden burst of editorial claims of "discovery" in our amateur photo-media anent Brassai's books and re-publication by opportunistic publishers. But when it happens, I would still recommend that you buy them, the claims of a new discovery aside. Brassai's photographs - *i.e.*, images - were all psychologically evocative of the unseen reality amid which we dailt walk, but without any precious pretense or intent, as, for example, Cartier-Bresson.

When the Nazi moved into Paris, Brassai was still there, having refused to leave with the majority of the Paris Crowd. He was more fortunate than most in that Picasso, who also sat out the War in Paris, took him in and got him work. As a result, Brassai got such work as creating the photographic decor for the ballet *Le Rundez-Vous*, and the play *En Passant*. Cecil Beaton has admitted to me in our last interview that he was endebted to Brassai's images, which diminishes neither.

One of Brassai's snapshots of one member (Henry Miller) of the Paris Crowd, among whom he was always to be found, is reproduced in the article on Anaïs Nin's "The Diaries", *q.v.*

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AFTERWORD: Two years after the above was published, all of Brassai's Paris picture-books were re-published in the U.S., but they have not sold well.

CONJUGATING THE TECHNICAL VERB

Prolix antecedents lie scattered in the draft,
Of some pronoun-happy writers, with IT both fore and aft:
Investigate each pronoun - be certain it's alive -
Then bury all antecedents unrelated to your jive.

Predicates and objects are often led astray
By conjunctions unrelated as much as night and day;
And sentences made compound lose their feeling when
Comparisons from different fields defy the reader's ken.

Maniacal boners can frequently elude
An editor's bright blue pencil and after, take refuge
Within the reproducible from whence to carry back
Cries of wholesale depredation that mark the writer 'hack'.

By some weird alchemy the sense of FACT has changed
From something undeniable to something quite estranged:
A FACT is true and definite, not probability,
It's not confirmed or based upon assumed validity.

Participles hanging in many an odd place
In otherwirse respectable phrase of pith and grace;
Do watch those dangling openings that start so bravely north
And then are left suspended with no sense coming forth.

MORE and MOST preceding your adjectives galore
Are insidious offenders, illegal to the core;
In addition, nouns and adverbs related to such forms
Just cannot be compared at all with any formal norms.

Thus jargon, cant, and slang, and much redundancy
Tautology and frequent views reflect inadequacy
Of mastery of language - the English tongue, we mean,
And writers so afflicted should seek the golfing green.

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NOTE: The above doggerel was written during that period when I was working as a contractual technical editor for various D.O.D. contractors around the country, and could suggest why so many technical manuals create so many problems for users.

The Photographic Philosophy of ANSEL ADAMS

American Photographer

With the exception of Stieglitz, Ansel Adams has received more media attention than any other American photographer - and not all media were concerned with Photography in any of its many manifestations.

The basis of my series of interviews of exceptional American photographers has been to offer a sense of a *national* photographic identity to the confused and beleaguered among us, regardless of what level they practiced their art.

The concept was best articulated, I felt, through the philosophical comments of the interviewees, rather than a journalistic-type exposition upon their produce. Ansel's career both as a photographer and photographic writer spans more than half a century. He is easy to talk with, is casually urbane, and has the poise that comes from a complete self-assurance that is refreshing in an age of canonized mediocrity. Projecting a sense of inner dynamism, his erudition and articulateness, coupled with his famous produce, make-up a vital part of our modern photographic continuum.

One of the ironies of Ansel is that while he is probably our best known living photographer, and one of our better photographic writers, his books are really very rarely actually *read!* In his words:

"They are skimmed."

I once wrote that the heart of his books lies always in his Forewords. And there is more than a germ of truth there, as he is always meticulously careful to spell-out in his Forewords the precise premise upon which he is writing. For example, it may pain those who pay cultish lip-service to the fame of Ansel without ever learning its legitimate basis to find out that he is adamant in the following:

"The literature of Photography is replete with repetitions of errors and questionable formulae and procedures...The fundamental principles of optics and sensitometry remain unchanged since from the beginnings of Photography...There is no such thing as REALITY in graphic expression. We create our statement of the world around us within LIMITATIONS of the medium employed...The more Photography expands in every domain, the more confused our understanding may become. Blind devotion to any particular equipment - film, paper, developer, format - can only have deleterious results...Information through Photography is abetted by aesthetic factors; expression depends upon adequate technique. Emphasis only on technique is only justified insofar as it will

simplify and clarify an attempt by a photographer to make a statement, project a concept...We must always remember that the ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE of Photography is the PICTURE, not the manipulation of equipment or of equipment." (*)

The interview went along easily and comfortably, with coffee now and then. In order to give the full flavour of the interview, because I feel it is important to the whole thrust of this work, I will depart from my usual method of presenting comments of interviewees, and will resort to the conventional method of interjecting a question by me here and there. This will clarify Ansel's comments, on the one hand; and perhaps extend your understanding of how I conduct interviews.

"I think your interview series is a good idea. I don't believe anyone has ever written about the living whole of Photography. Photography is such a tremendous thing nowadays - its limits are expanding faster than they can be defined. Your living interviews series helps hold it together on a very inclusive basis.

"I'm not a studio-photographer, as you know. Years ago I did some rather commercial work - catalogues, books, a few other things. And I've been honoured, quite generously, by such as the PPA, ASMP, and groups like that. But it is an entirely different world from mine. I feel they - that is, organized Photography - should be getting into more expressive fields. I don't know - I don't have their contacts.

"But to me, the whole thing of Photography is ridiculously simple! We just have to get out of this tight, rigid situation Photography is in today! - chiefly because of words, semantics, media!"

I am perhaps a bit more aware of that than most. You might be surprised to see what our failed journalism majors delete from my copy - particularly their reasons.

"They shouldn't do that. I don't think it helps. If a man REALLY has something to say, if he has the demonstrated authority to say it, he should be heard for himself, not to have his words editted by some editor's personal bias. I have some experience with editors, myself. Go on."

The aesthetique of Photography has had but five attempts at a formal statement since the turn of the century, beginning with Caffen in 1901 and probably ending with the asides by Larkin in 1948. Without taking anything away from the Newhalls at all, it is my contention that there is more of a basis for a photographic aesthetique in your writings than in theirs.

"Yes, I'll concede that. There have been only five books, as

you say - we need more. We distributed Doug Morgan's facsimile copy of Caffen's book to members of The Friends of Photography. But Beaumont is really an historian, that is his field, and as an historian, he is tops in his field. I remember when he saw my first book of photographs. He said it changed his whole life. He wrote a very glowing letter, which I've always treasured. My association with the Newhalls has been rather profound. Nancy carried on those great text-book relationships established in the Paul Strand book, Time In New England, and in the Sierra Club book, This American Earth. And, of course, with numerous books and exhibitions with me, notably my The Eloquent Light.

"But your idea of writing about the full picture of Photography today in terms of its practitioners is something new.

"Beaumont has done it historically - he trained the Gernsheims, which I assume you know? - and they've done quite well. In fact, I write and telephone the Newhalls quite frequently. It's time, really, that someone sat down to ask the simple question: What Is Photography?

"And I would suggest, based on writing, that Photography is a language. But the man on the street, with his rigid patterns of value-judgements, is confused by the destructive news of hearing that someone has paid thousands for an old photograph. It may have historical importance, but not PHOTOGRAPHIC importance. You hear of someone buying a print for $7,000 - no ptint is worth that much money, obviously! Think of what such sums would mean in the furtherance of serious work by creative young people!"

> The auctions staged by such as Park-Benet and Southeby's of old photographica would certainly merit your word "destructive". It is not enough, it would seem, that we have modern Photography as a manipulated and controlled price-industry - we also have its historical continua being managed on the very same basis - price.

"Yes, you're right, and I've had some experience with that, also. The elder Weston, who was a very dear friend, at the top of his career, when he was practically dying, was getting $35 a print. And recently, his prints were commanding $500 apiece, or better. There aren't very many original Westons left, as a big collector in the East has most of them. But it is one of the unfortunate ironies. I know, for example, that were I to pass away tomorrow, there are prints in this house - of mine - that would have a sudden and tremendous value, but I can't do anything about it.

The F:64 GROUP's REMAINING MEMBERS:

"Let's see...there's Adams, Van Dyke, Sonya Noskowiak, Alma Laven-

son, and Henry Swift...oh, yes, and John Edwards. Roi Partridge was never a member - he was Imogen's husband, you know. No, Dorthea Lange was never a member - and what an error we made! We felt at that time that she - that is her work - wasn't "pure" enough!"

Were you, individually or collectively, aware at the time of the f:64 Group that you were going to end-up destroying the strangle-hold soft-focus Pictorialism had on American Photography? I'm referring, of course, to White's group and the Buffalo group.

"Oh, yes - it was quite conscious on the part of the f:64 Group. We really didn't want to destroy anything, although that seemed to be the end-result. All that was available at that time were the pictorial picture-clubs, and there was no place to exhibit straight Photography. They wouldn't even let Weston in! I used to be very "pictorial" in my early days, I guess we all were. Then, on a day in the early Thirties, I saw some negatives by Paul Strand, taken down in New Mexico. And I suddenyl realized what a smooth image could be, without fooling around with all this pictorial business, this romantic overlay.

"Paul's credo suddenly clarified the straight approach for me. A lot of people, then and now, think straight Photography is pulling a print showing a lot of dust spots, pin-holes, with no manipulation. This isn't so. Spotting a print - burning, dodging - all of these things are involved in straight Photography. This affects the quality of the PRINT, not the IMAGE. We used what are called smooth surfaces for maximum detail, and above all, we NEVER titled a print."

Your response to Strand recalls a similar response of mine on first seeing an American Annual photograph of yours in the early Thirties. It was a study, a really stark study of a factory roof, full of angles and the corrugated vertical sidings, I remember.

"Oh?...I had forgotten that one. Liliane! - make a note to look up that from my early factory studies. Yes, it was a very stark thing. I'm glad that you reminded me. I'm coming out with a new Portfolio - that factory shot was one of my best - and I may include it. I'm looking for my photographs that haven't been seen so often, or not at all, and that is a good one.

"But to return to the f:64 Group...I think that what we did was to polarize, to simply change the direction of Photography. Stieglitz was quite appreciative, I remember. He, himself, had gone to straight Photography in the Thirties. There was a renaissance around 1927 - 1928, chiefly because of Weston. The professionals had been making fairly straight prints for some time but they had never been in the art-group, the Pictorialists. They were more practical.

"The whole idea at the time was to create "beauty". People forget that that was the reason we created the f:64 Group - to create beauty. People used to say - and I'm sure you know this - that we were trying to destroy beauty. That was not true at all. We were trying to create real photographic beauty - not in the safe, romantic styles, but in a photographic-art vacuum!"

EDWARD WESTON & THE FRIENDS:

"I remember Weston in his studio in Glendale was making what was a lot of money in those days from his portraits. Some of them were really beautiful. But he was selling himself to his clients, trying to give the client the image the client wanted. And - he was successful.

"Then one day he decided that this was not Photography, this wasn't for him, so he just walked away from it all. His work wasn't HIM, that was the important thing - it simply wasn't HIM!

"He actually left everything - family, studio. He felt the need to do it that way. He didn't realize that he might have made a different transition, in another way, on another level. But that was his choice, and it ptoduced great acheivements. Stieglitz and Weston didn't get along, but if it hadn't been for Stieglitz!...Stieglitz made the first breakthrough in encouraging public acceptance of Weston's approach to Photography.

"I also remember Stieglitz saying: Sure, I'd like to see your work, but all that interests me is - are you going to go beyond me? - I know what I have done and it's pretty damned good - but you'll have to go beyond me - you'll have to make it on your own and in your own way! Yes, he said that to me.

"We're still accused out here, chiefly by East Coast photographers, of having a "West Coast School" dominated by Adams and the Weston brothers, together with a few others. Now, this is an entirely false thing. It was probably because we set-up The Freinds of Photography at Carmel.

"It was set-up here and, of course, most of the trustees are local. And some of our first exhibitions were by local people. If you shoot a rock or a trees on Point Lobos, the print is going to suggest the Westons. You can't escape it. But we have had classic exhibitions - a retrospective of Imogen, Atget, the Westons, Paul Starnd, Evans, and so forth. I'd say that half our exhibitions have been historical or classical. The other half have been mostly young people and experimenters. Speaking of the many young photographers of today...they seem to have ABSOLUTELY NO SENSE OF VOCATION! So you see, The Friends of Photography isn't dominated by people who live in Carmel or Big Sur or

even in Monterey.

"It's like a review I just finished reading by Vestal. I'll have to write about that to him. It was about a brochure by Dick Garrod and Henry Gilpin, the City Planner for Monterey and the Deputy Sheriff of the county. It was about Photography that I happen to like. It wasn't great Photography, but it was certainly better than most. And there was Vestal writing, in effect: well, after all, anybody can do this...that sort of thing. He didn't look at the IMAGES to see what the images were saying. That sort of writing doesn't help Photography."

Don't you feel that David is more interested in his image as a "writer", as he certainly isn't qualified as a photographic critic?

"Oh, yes, his image is everything to him, like a lot of his ilk. There is nothing wrong with having likes and dislikes, of course - Brett Weston will frankly state that he is only interested in his own work, his own ideas, but...he doesn't WRITE! - and that's the difference. And when student-photographers, finding only this kind of guff to read.. there's also Farber and Hattersley. I don't know...I've been tempted to write a criticism of Hattersley, but would it be worth the effort? Such writers aren't critics, obviously."

PHOTOGRAPHY AS A TRADE?

Have you ever felt that Abbott was right when she said Robinson set Photography back a hundred years with his insistence that Photography was "Art"?

"I know she thought so. She wrote a book about her views."

She did that. She was quite clever in articulating her resentments, but she failed, I feel, somehow to articulate something positive in their place.

"Oh, yes, but that's fairly common. Julia Margaret Cameron... some of her pictures were wonderful, ut she got into that god-awful Victorian sentimentality - but which, at the period, could be accepted. Whereas her portraits were vital records, and it is wrong to try to judge them in the light of today, one way or another. There is her portrait of Hershel - that great strong face!

"We have the same problems today. There are thousands of photographers today who are producing highly subjective images, and in all of them you cannot find no clear line,standards or criteria. I look at them, I criticize them, but I criticize them on the basis of what they were trying to say, and how do they say it. I try to under-

stand these things, but too many of the young photographers don't know themselves what they're trying to say.

"But it's terribly hard to make these evaluations because of this modern fad of subjectiveness. They call it self-expression or being creative, whatever that may mean to them; but the student-photographer can't make these evaluations - he's too close to his own work. And so much of the writing on Photography today is so much guff.

"Most media writing is crap, really. But when editors delete valid comments, that's very bad. It's also presumptuous. It shouldn't happen, although I know it does."

I agree, of course. I would also say that our greatest lack, collectively, is of professional authoritative critics, not so-called print-judges, but the historically and philosophically educated critics of the total national photographic experience at all levels. In the sense of literature and art and drama having critics whose efforts enrich the particular discipline. But aside from what I've observed around the country - and I'm sure you have, too - there is nothing worth reading among modern American photographic literature, even if the average photographer had learned how to read - which he hasn't. There are exceptions, of course, but I feel the generalisation is valid.

"They skim books...yes, I'd agree. We have all sorts of so-called writers, but - you're right - we have no critics. There's Jake Deschin - he's a writer whom I respect, but he's not a critic. Coleman seems to be very erudite and he seems to really try, but he's a bit too hysterical at times, I feel.

"As for Photography as a business, professional Photography - that is, the commercial and portrait side - is a trade, and doesn't necessarily have anything to do with art at all, with a capital 'A' or lower-case. I'm not in the business of Photography, but I am a professional photographer. The studio photographers all do what they feel is necessary to pay the rent, but that doesn't go into the dimension of Photography as an expressive art."

Would you say that the banality of our photo-media has a pervasive effect, for the worst, upon the kind of Photography their readers produce?

"I think Polaroid demonstrated that quite clearly - that the majority of people are only interested in an optical and mechanical

DIARY. Dr. Land's objective was to get a medium that everyone could use with almost immediate results. Polaroid is really a magnificient medium IF you know how to utilize it. But, you have to be a magnificient photographer to begin with!

"Conventions in Photography are so set today. The average studio-picture or the average wedding-picture are simply machine-made. People like Paul Gittings are very successful and independent because they make AVERAGE photographs, but no-one relates them to creative Photography."

ON IMMATURE PHOTOGRAPHIC Ids:

> Because of the economic subservience of our media to their hardware advertisers, we are drowning in an equipment-syndrome, especially among the young - that is, they are being brain-washed into thinking that they should only shoot those subjects which match the marvellousness of their gear.

"Yes! - and you must put yourself in the proper mystical state! Minor White is a marvellous photographer. He is one of my favourite people, but not in terms of his writings about Photography. He's one of my closest friends, but we're in violent disagreement over the right approach to teaching and to theory.

"Bullock is another. A beautiful photographer, but his writings keep getting in my way when directly associated with his images. If the photograph doesn't say it, all by itself...I have the feeling that those photographers who take up a kind of writing called 'explanatory' have a hidden sense of inferiority. Not only of themselves but also of their relations with Photography. As though the photographic art wasn't strong enough by itself and they have to explain it so that you will respect Photography, per se, and, hopefully, them!

> Like the vast number of modern photographers who feel compelled to always introduce themselves as "professional" photographers at most any gathering?

"Exactly! Semantics, again. I remember a man who said that history was an esoteric subject. My notion of esotericism was of something not having any practical significance, not materially useful. Music - composing music is esoteric, while performing music is not. Medicine is not esoteric, if you want to make such fine distinctions. My photo-books are not esoteric, yet any statements I might decide to write for my Portfolios could be.

"Like the people who buy my photographs...some of them buy them chiefly because of the subject. I do have spectacular subjects, which give me spectacular pictures, and probably my visualisation, my treatment does add impact. But it is the the original subject that had

to be there in the first place. Others could shoot the same subject but not produce the same impact, the same emotional response. And some might even do better.

"There are so many photographers who just can't visualize a single image to convey a sense of the whole. What I don't like is when someone tries to make use of Photography to put something over on me."

Like the "great" Steichen, perhaps?

"Steichen and I didn't get along...but he did a very fine thing when he introduced Stieglitz to contemporary art. Some of his early photographs are quite beautiful. Steichen was a great man but his later advertising attitude got into his Photography.

"The trouble is, we never know what is happening when it happens. In the perspective of time the unknown and the obscure may be placed on high pedestals, and the high-and-mighty reduced to inconsequential characters of history. I have observed that occasionally a great personality asserts itself from the start and grows in importance and effectiveness. Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Weston, and a few others in Photography earned this eminence. Bach was "rediscovered" by Mendelsshon 200 years after his prime acheivements! What will the next two or three centuries reveal for Photography?"

* * *

And there you have it - a conversational interview with America's most widely known and least comprehended photographer, the kind of relateable interview the like of which you will never encounter in our meaningless photo-media.

Ansel Adams has returned architectonics to View Photography, a formal elucidation and systemization of photographic knowledge long neglected by our alleged educationalists and media-managers.

As I stated at the beginning, Ansel's books are widely bought - and barely read. Let me suggest you pull your own copies off the shelf and actually read them. Not only will your emotional convixions about Ansel Adams change, I feel, but you will also discover that there is, in fact, an authentic photographic philosophy that has evolved and endured for more than 150 years.

The lead-in shot of Ansel was taken by his long-time assistant, Liliane de Crock...who subsequently married Doug Morgan.

(*) = *CAMERA & LENS; Ansel Adams; 1970; Morgan & Morgan.*

ANSEL ADAMS: The Last Interview

The preceding interview was the last interview granted by Ansel Adams, as he died shortly there after. When published, it brought forth many appreciative comments, and was later reprinted in several foreign photo-media.

While I have compiled a seperate book of my many photographic interviews, of both domestic and foreign practitioners, I wanted to include the Adams interview here, not only for what of historical merit it may possess, but also because it does contain literary allusions which are in keeping with the primary thrust of this work.

I might also mention that Adams' prediction that after his death his works would demand fabulous prices has come true, and with a vengence. The Friends at Carmel have savagely exploited the myth and the mystique of Adams, by flooding the market with reprinted portfolios, picture post-cards, calendars, note-paper, etc., etc. To grow fat on another man's wounds seems indigenous to the nature of what Kipling called the lesser breed without the Law.

There is a perversity in things, which I mention in passing, in that in my work on my photographic interviews, you will find two lengthy interviews with Cecil Beaton. The second one was also his last interview, as he, too, died shortly thereafter.

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BIOGRAPHY AS SEX

OSCAR WILDE; Richard Ellmann; Alfred A. Knopf; N.Y.C.; $25.

(While this review is not quite within the time-frame of the thrust of this work, it is included as being *a propos* in terms of prior comments on the condition of the literary experience. It was written originally on request of an editor who was bemused by the hysterical and consistent acclaim given Ellmann's biography of Wilde. I was asked to determine the validity of the acclaim with my "iconoclastic critical faculty", which I have done. Actually, the book was not worth reviewing , in terms of the traditional responsibility of book-reviewing.)

It would appear that the current breed of American book-reviewers are all of the limp-wristed type, who lisp in lavender syllables, and gush purple prose whenever a book by or about a "queer" comes out,

and make flirty motions at a word-processor. The current hysterial adulation given subject book would seem to validify that proposition.

After reading the book, two facts immediately asserted themselves as paramount: the book wasn't worth reviewing; and drooling over sexual perversions seems to have become the hall-mark of biography.

Ellmann's style is atrocious. It reminded me of the days when I was blasting my way through the concretised writings of Dreiser. It also suggests that he was being paid by the word, as the padding would have done credit to Dickens, who was paid by the word.

The majority of so-called reviewers made much of how Ellmann deliniated the social *mores* of the period. This is hardly true, in as much as Ellmann succeeded only in making passing references to the *mores* and the *tabus* of a distinct social *class*.

We have drowned in a veritable niagara of would-be biographies of Wilde and his ilk for most of this century. They have long since exhausted whatever allure obscenities scribbled on privy walls may have for a certain type of mentality. I found little that was new, save a few photographs, or that had not been previously exploited to the point of banality or personal proclivity. And Ellmann seemed driven to make much of Wilde's admission that he had been "seduced by Ross".

He has paraded all of the main characters from the Mauve Decade, the Yellow Nineties, *fin de siecle*, whether they were contributory to a life of Wilde directly or not. But too many of Ellmann's digressions and asides, designed apparently to show the extent of his learning and research, reveal nothing of Wilde, *per se* - the man or the writer. Nor can I comprehend how such a work would require 20 years aborning. Were one to delete all of the superfluous asides, the irrelevant dwelling on sexual encounters, one would have a book one-third as thick, with nothing truly pertinent to Wilde's life missing.

The book is massive, and that, too, seems to be the order of the day as to determining a book's "importance". But, then, so was Ellmann's over-blown life of Joyce, wherein Ellmann was also mostly pre-occupied with Joyce's sexual aberations. In a phrase, Ellmann has offered nothing startling new anent Wilde, his time nor his place. His infinite digressions interfere with the flow and imagery, apparently designed to impress the unwary reader with Ellmann's scholarly background and his wide-ranging reading habits. There is a kind of simpering glee running through all of Ellmann's sexual references that must make the perceptive among us wonder what all the fuss is about.

The court-room scenes in particular contain too many irrelecant asides - all Ellmann - which do little to advance the story. There is a consistent air of supercilious superiority on the part of Ellmann that is detracting. The only truly compassionate references are those in which he speaks of Constance. I had expected Ellmann, with his much touted access to "heretofore unavailable information", to say something worthwhile about Wilde's two sons, one who became a priest and one who was killed during the Kaiser's War. The psychological implications of one son opting for the priesthood and the other for war would have, in itself, laid the basis for a good morality play, don't you think?

Reading the book is tedious and as mentioned, his style is atrocious. At no point does the writing flow easily and pleasantly; it seems too mannered, too deliberately manipulated to fill-up space on a page. The interminal asides interfere to a gross degree, as mentioned, and contribute not one whittol to the whole. The organisation of the book is quite Germanic, and at the turn of the century would have undoubtedly been hailed with enthusiasm by German intellectuals. In this age of the instant-everything-syndrome, the book is most likely to be bought, because of the hysterical acclaim, but really not read. There were passages that reminded me of Günther Grass.

Wilde comes through as a two-dimensional character. He is unrelateable to the unknown reader in terms of sympathy, revulsion, envy, or compassion. Biographies should never be of neuter gender, as one cannot find a personal relateability in such. Ellmann's definite views of Wilde's latter-day chums are blatant and inferred too strongly to hold the unknown reader's interest.

The last days in Paris, for instance - one cannot decide if Ellmann wished to create a sympathetic climate for the reader to come into, or simply to report in journalistic style the actuality of the events of Wilde's death. This is not good writing. It is possible, of course, that the sterility of the closing chapters of the book may have been due to a writer's impatient to have done with a labour that had occupied him for two decades. This happens, as I am aware, myself. You will notice that the pace - which is not the same thing as flow - is the writing for the first 100 pages is much more leisurely and interesting that any which follow.

As far as social implications of the tribal customs of the period, I was frankly disappointed. What socio-political mirrors Ellmann burnished reflected little that has has not been reflected in similar mirrors over the years, and frequently more adroitly. And all the touting of Ellmann's book as the "definitive" biography of Wilde puzzles me, just as his equally touted "definitive" biography of Joyce puzzled me as to the justification for the claim. If dwelling on the

sexual peregrinations of the subject of an alleged biography is now deemed "definitive", then Ellmann's work may merit that appellation. I suppose that because of my early exposure to truly great writers, poets, painters, musicians, I've always held what may be a naive notion - that writers should always be better than they can be.

To some of my generation, it is also possible that because of the irrelevant asides, the book may produce a kind of cotton-candy form of melancholia by stirring up a few long forgotten memories of another time, another place. I could not recommend Ellmann's work on Joyce, nor would I recommend his work on Wilde. Joyce has always struck me, as with D.H.Lawrence, as a grossly over-rated writer. He had the appetites of an Irish peasant and a peculiarly Irish intellect. O'Casey was the better writer. Joyce wrote out of a private anger, not anguish; resentment, not compassion; spite, not concilliation. Edna O'Brien writes in the same genre, but in more human terms. All of which is not to detract from Joyce's peculiar contributions to the language of the Sassenach, ut Joyce, like Wilde, should be read when one is young and naive.

When a biographer, regardless of his erudition, literary merits, scholarship, comes through to the reader stronger than his subject, it is not a good biography. Rather, it is simply an exercise in intellectual vanity, with which no reader can truly relate. And the anecdotal style that treats chiefly of the periferial activties of others, does not contribute to making the subject of the biography personally relateable. In a very real sense, Ellmann persists in getting between the reader and Wilde. One gets to know Ellmann rather well.

I cannot accept Ellmann's biography of Wilde as literature, nor is it great writing.

* * *

AFTER-THOUGHTS:

Ellmann's predilection for concentraing on sexual encounters seems to have become a mandatory pre-requisite for modern biographers. A recent BBC short-wave broadcast of a program entitles Good Books had three British publishers talking about book-publishing in the U.K. today. What was interesting was that all three agreed that biography makes-up at least 20% of their annual lists, and that they would all prefer a biography that was heavy on sexual peculiarities. One must wonder about the future of Humane Letters.

* * *

D.H.MOORE

PETER NICASTRO

THE SOCIETY PAGE

(After the collpase of Hitler's War, upon my return, I was informed that my health had also collapsed, and that I was afflicted with what D.H.Lawrence once referred to as the "romantic white man's disease" - pulmonary tuberculosis. On reflexion, one can recall that Lawrence, Crane, Chopin, Mansfield, among others, had in truth died of TB. In those days, the late Forties, sanatoria were placed high in the mountains, the belief being that breathing pure, cold air aided in the "cure". Today, of course, instead of being the nations' number one killer, TB is now ranked at eleventh. It was the enforced inertia of lying in bed month after month that caused one to seek mental stimulation in most anything that was available. This consisted primarily of newspapers, magazines of the popular type, an occasional periodical. Since 1963 I have not read domestic newspapers, subscribed to any magazines, watched the idiot tube of TV (being daily informed of the ways of the world via short-wave radio), but in those days out of desperation, I read anything that was available. It was during my stay in the mountains, reflecting on the aridity of such media, that I wrote the following piece. While it cannot pass as great writing, it does reflect an aspect of time, place, and ephemeral interests.)

The economy of belief which wisdom practices forbids us to embrace fundamental truths where commonly observed phenomena will serve our turn. The eternal antagonism between what is fact and what is accepted as fact is perhaps no better illustrated than by the fall from grace of our contemporary press, from its former straight reportage of factual news to its so-called interpretive and personally biased forms of journalism.

The alleged freedom of the press is more of a myth than the alleged freedom of the individual. The vaunted power of the press, however, remains intact - if anything, more powerful. I've sometimes wondered whether or not this aspect of latter-day journalism might not be due to this Faustian metamorphosis of The Society Page.....that is responsible for turning our national press from a reliable source of news to a mechanidising medium and a superficial form of escapist writing.

Our capability for making fools of ourselves on the slightest provocation is becoming a national trait, it seems, which the press has openly encouraged. The most minute details of murders, sex-crimes, executions, domestic strife of so-called public figures are emblazoned daily across the front pages as "news". The almost degenerate avidity that accompanied the recent marriage of a motion-picture actress to the head of a Gilbert-&-Sullican principality, the current furor over so-called expose-type magazines, the pseudo-shock technique of current journalistic reporting, all offer cases in point.

If we were to establish a point in time for the retrogressive tendency of our modern press, we could probably fix it at the time when the destruction of conventional delicacy and the creation of false American social standards began; that is to say, when The Society Page was integrated into our national press. Proof of its insidious influence may be found in its destruction of an entire working class we used to know as "domestics".

While it is understood and accepted by intelligent people that equality of man is feasible only as a moral contention, The Society Page has fostered the myth that economic equality is the only true American measure of a man!

In the case of domestics, the myth became reality, for the death of the domestic class marked the collapse of an era that might have gone on to represent the best of an indigenous American was of life. The propriety of ptinting the names of individuals having no just claim on public attention is today not even a bad academic joke among out so-called journalists. The amount of space devoted to domestic infelicities of utterly innucous people striles one as a bit obscene, when compared with the three column inches buried in the inside pages about the murder of a Prime Minister of Malaysia.

The sensationalised affair that screams from the front page will be forgotten by tomorrow, while the remote assination in Malaysia may lead to another global war, and is dismissed in three column inches. If we consider that the only claim for The Society Page is the personalisation of the doings of insignificant people, we can more readily comprehend that the front page has become an extension of The Society Page - just the names are changed, and perhaps the locale. Inasmuch as The Society Page is solely concerned with that arena of human frailties in which the flesh and the Devil reign in pamered union, the contention becomes less startling.

Fifty years ago the private affairs of unfortunate people would not have been discussed in any respectable newspaper. That they are now frequently hysterically detailed on the front page suggests, again,

the influence of The Society Page. It might also be mentioned, parenthetically, that the startling rise of the sensation-mongering tabloids does not seem to disturb any editor. Yet it is easy to see that it was the decades of missionery work of The Society Page that laid the foundation for the public's interest in social and sexual aberrations. Yet no-one thinks to blame The Society Page.

The reason for this is that The Society Page is outwardly staid and decorous! - and if it had a god it would be Janus.

On the surface, The Society Page is devoted chiefly to the seemingly harmless goings-on of men and women given a kind of social distinction, although criteria for such distinction have never been been enunciated. Were The Society Page obviously full of scandal and openly insidious gossip, it would immediately lose its Janus-charm and influence. In consequence, whenever our native "aristocrats" misbehave, the details are carried in the front page.

Millions of women, every Sunday, religiously thumb their newspapers to The Society Page, so effective has been the indoctrination of its conceptors. Millions of women have grown up with the belief that to find their name on The Society Page, or to have an acquaintance, however slight, with any name that does get into print, is in some mystical way a prerequisite to their personal happiness or domestic bliss. Cognizance of structured "Momism", the essentially feminine nature of the country, and that 80%-odd of the material wealth is now in the name of women who have survived the creators of that wealth, The insidiousness of The Society Page becomes more apparent.

Naturally, there is no objection to The Society Page because of whatever harm it may do the people whom it exploits. After all, the worst effect it can have on them is to give them an exaggerated sense of their own importance. The dubious fame of one's name in print palls rather quickly, I've found, and to give it meaning, there must be something of ongoing substance because of it. It is interesting to speculate how many marriages might have been destroyed by The Society Page, by instilling in wives phoney aspirations, both as women and as wives. Once, marriage was a private affair in which outsiders had no possible interest, save that of vulgar and snobbish curiosity. And it is a straight line continuum from The Society Page to the gossip-columns.

Maxim debetur pueris reverentia can be stretched to include The Society Page without losing any of its significance or value. The debauching of all higher social instincts, the overt mockery of breeding, the affrontry of social training by the advet of The Society Page is the most iniquitous of crimes, for it is a crime against the very soul

of civilised man.

So far as can be ascertained, not one of our would-be social philosophers has ever uttered a word of serious denunciation or remonstrance. That The Society Page is regarded with contempt by every intelligent person cannot be denied, but who has ever challenged its nefarious influence?

Society, *per se*, presupposes by its very definition an aristocracy, a class apart. Yet the Founding Fathers strove to prevent an American aristocracy by forbidding the entail of landed estates. But they could not have forseen those modern systems of mechanical and mercantile endeavours that have given us a distincy pseudo-aristocracy of railroad kings, cigarette dukes, sugar marquises, and oil barons - to say nothing of that newer "aristocracy" comprising advertising earls, theatrical privy seals, motion-picture duchesses, and executive knights of the realm.

This American nobility was founded on the imposition of the belief that material possessions defined the status of a man, and nothing could have been better calculated to stir the unimaginative and so-called practical minded American than one that is devoid of a way of life that has passed. The latter-day nobility is founded upon the shifting sands of sterile immolations of attitudes, values, posturings and affectations as chronicled on The Society Page.

Where in the early days the artificially created American middle-class snob derived a great deal of promiscuous and vicarious enjoyment from owning yachts and spendid entertainments and great mansions set-up by those exalted on The Society Page, today the popular and daily worship of the golden ass is considered to be an authentic role if only the rituals are accompanied by a consumptive and harrowing glimpse of intimate details of the private lives of the idols of The Society Page.

For just as The Society Page continues to familiarise young women with the doings of a large number of men and women they are not ever likely to meet or know, so too has The Society Page corrupted those who habitually eat and enjoy ground beef and baked beans into reading how Shanghi Duck should be served, impressing upon the wives of hard-working office clerks the delectable "moderness" and the "importance" of Swedish silverware on Formica place-mats.

Young wives, who ostensibly married for love and a fuller life, and were willing to work and struggle and sacrifice to attain it on a *collective* basis, have been made quickly dissatisfied and embarassed with meagre budgets and financial planning. Their eyes begin to burn

with lust for the acquisitive life, and their daily lives begin to glow with the luminance of frustrated aspirations. From such faily assaults upon their newly developed domestic sensibilities, they recoil in dismay - their marriage is threatened! - all because the maple dining-room set, bought with time-payments, is not even remotely suggestive of the dining-room sets displayed on The Society Page, taken in the home of some society matron.

Aristotle once observed that Society originates in the need of a livelihood, but it exists for the sake of life. When The Society Page was taken into our journalistic system, our social death began, for just as in the beginning The Society Page set domestics of one house against the domestics of another house, especially at the local pub on their days off, so too today does it continue to propogate a kind of social degeneracy. For the social degeneracy The Society Page brought about in the kitchen 50-odd years ago, and all within one generation, has moved into the living-room and, of course, the bed-room.

Wars, of course, are great social levellers, but one of the ironies usually overlooked by our social scientists is that while the myth of social equality did allow previous domestic classes to become aware of and strike out for a higher mode of life, recent wars have given opportunities not otherwise possible to millions of people, to leave the rut of their expectant lives, move to the cities, earn more money, and then avidly put into practice all those undisciplined innuendoes they had avidly absorbed from The Society Page. Because of The Society Page, a ditch-digger suddenly acquiring modest wealth, begins to imagine that money carries with it an inherent claim to culture.

The Society Page, moreover, has taken hold of our literature with a tenacity that will only disintegrate when the planet explodes. It has become the most important element of fiction. Where once it sufficed for an author to mention a long-legged blonde with a pug-nose, today neither author nor reader will settle for anything less than a completely clinical description of the heroine's anatomy, and will the bed-room scenes depicted in fetish-inspiring detail. Our writers aggravate the original sin of The Society Page by depicting society - not as it is - but as The Society Page has inculcated the minds of the masses as to how they would like to have it!

It would seem that in order for a writer to have his material accepted today, he must have reached that spiritual state in which he regards The Society Page in the same spirit of veneration that an orthodox rabbi has for the Talmud, or a slaesman for the buyer of a gold-plated Cadillac.....

Myopia has seen Infinity, and formulated a thesis of existence.

* * *

(1976) D.H. MOORE

GREENWICH VILLAGE;

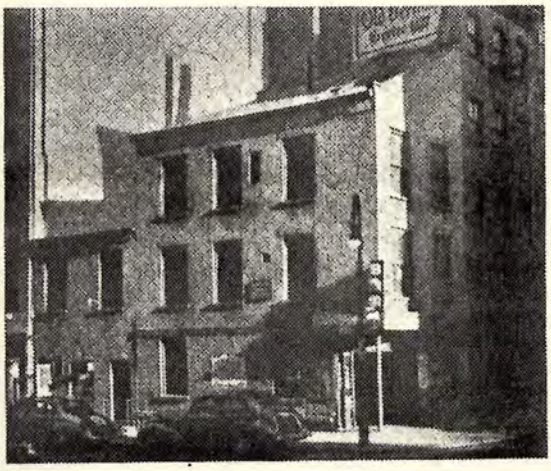
Street - Scenes

The Left Bank, Soho, Greenwich Village, North Beach....names that were once capable of firing the imagination and strengthening the aspirations of artists on two continents - writers, poets, painters.

Today, of course, the memory of such enclaves survives mainly in over-ripe romanticism in paper-backs written by people who were never there in the glory days of the American aesthetic experience. Or, in the minds of people of my generation, to whom "Art" was always spoken and written with a capital "A". The latter-day vulgarisation of the word by the Madison Avenue Mob and the legions of me-too poseurs claiming a dubious kinship with the aesthetic experience, have rendered the word of any intelligence.

When Lilitchka and I moved into the Village, a natural and inevitable move, there was still a yeasty, fecund, creative fever that permeated the buildings, the streets, the joints and the people who lived there. Men and women living there were aggressive contributors to a compelling *aestheque*. Even the well-fed rats and swollen cock-roaches were different from their cousins living in that alien world north of 14th Street.

In the Village I painted and wrote and composed and attended



N.Y.U., and spent all of my leisure time peregrinating through the dirty, intorted streets of the Village. In time I had wandered down every alley, inner court, mews, street and avenue. While the people we met, dined with, had lengthy and involved discussions about art and love and sex and God, were of vital importance to me, they were in some ineffable way divorced from my feelings about the streets.

There is a secret language of streets that whispers of many weird and wonderful things, if only you are sensitive enough and caulic enough to listen. I listened. I've sometimes thought that a man might fall in love with a place as he falls in love with a woman - both are equally inexplicable. The Village streets had the aura of an insipient love-affair, and some of my musings found their way subsequently into my writings.

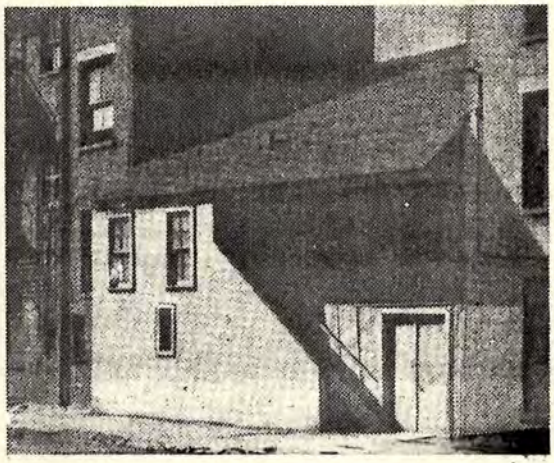
Even the street names seemed to seperate the Village from the howling metropolis that surrounded it, from Houston Street in the south to 14th Street on the north, and from 3rd Avenue to 8th Avenue, it was an enclosed and self-sustained community.

There was Cherry Lane, Washington Mews, Abingdon Square, Mulry Square and Sheridan Square; Patchin Place, Bedford, Bethane, Jane and Bank; Morton, Christopher, Waverly, Barrow, Macdougall, Greenwich. Nor should one forget Gay Street, the mere mentuon of which would cause any "queer" within ear-shot to simper and giggle. This was a time before that lovely word was corrupted and vulgarised into a popular designation for biologic mistakes of nature. Actually, the street was named for an American politician who figured prominently in Lincoln's Cabinet, and streets in such towns as Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington have been named for him.

One of my earlier and not really original notions was to wander around the Village and sketch the divers street-scenes, but it quickly became apparent that the idea was being practiced qholesale by every aspiring artist. No street, during the say-time, was without its collexion of easels and artists, sketching or painting some aspect of the Village - mostly building fronts. Most were quite amateurish, and I noted that especially among the younger "artists" more time was spent in wordy discussions of "Art" than in applying brush to canvas. But, then, we were all young once, I believe. One had seen the same thing on the Left Bank and in Soho, and it was undoubtedly also occurring on North Beach in San Francisco, although it was to be a few years before we moved to that Baghdad-By-The-Bay, as some emphemeral wit said.

One rarely saw a camera, even among the tourists. Photography was shunned like a communicable social disease, being dismissed as simply a mechanical device for recording whatever was in front of the

camera; a device with utterly no respectability in terms of Art. I will confess that such, too, was my judgement at that time.



Having no interest in Photography, *per se*, and lacking the leisure to maintain a traditional diary, there came the day when a camera was given to me, probably as a birthday present. It occurred to me then that a camera could be used as a visual diary - recording images which could be elaborated upon in words at some future time. The idea fascinated me and I subsequently burned-up many a roll of 824 orthochromatic film, without ever really knowing what I was doing. The camera, incidentally was a Kodak Bantam Special.

My interest in and extensive writings on Photography were still two decades away, and I easily admit that I regretted my indifference to the medium for so long, in light of the places I had been and the people I had known. A handful of the snapshots taken with the Bantam Special are appended herewith, without apology or defense. While their techical flaws are obvious, attesting more to my ignorance than to any deficiency of the camera, they none-the-less have taken on a psychical significance as I've grown older.

In re-discovering these snapshots in my files, and deciding to include them here, I admit to a slight melancholia - not only for a time that was, but because the sharp pain from the realisation all over again that Lilitchka is not with me. I am satisfied, however, in my own mind, that had I been photographically knowledgeable at the time, I am certain I could have produced a few compelling images that would have had inherently a personal relateability for unknown viewers.

Unhappily, America is predicated upon change, never duration, and many of the scenes or things depicted in these snapshots are no longer existing. The Village today has become a slick, sick, chromium-plated, and obscenely expensive ghetto for mindless minions chasing what Dickens called The Almighty Dollar.

Still, I was there once, in the glory days, and Lilitchka was always with me.....

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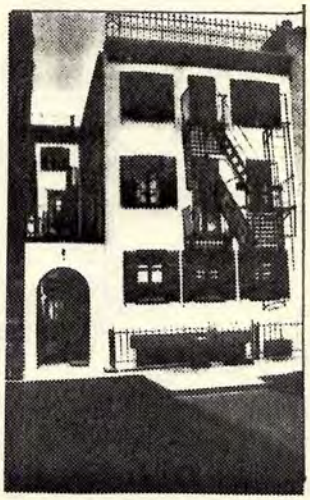
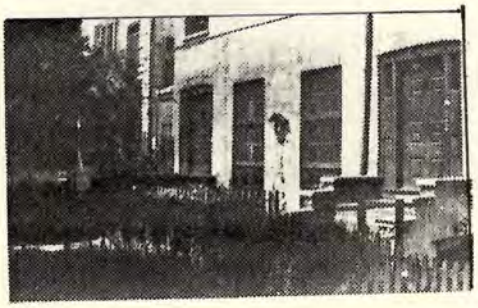
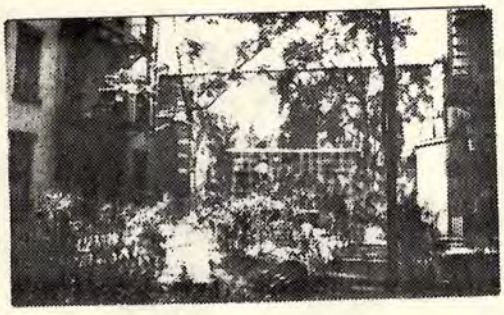
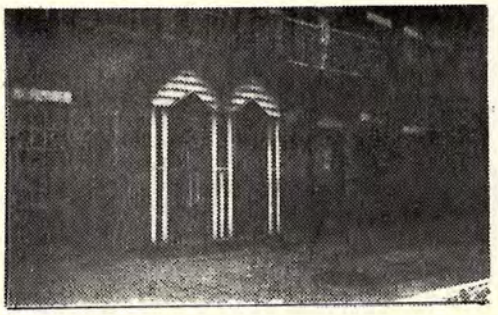
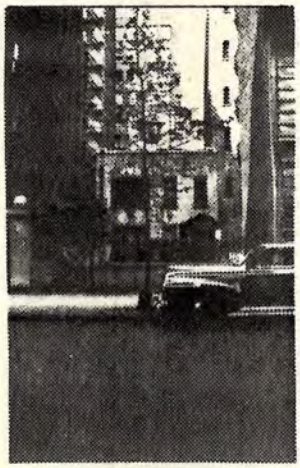
LAUNDRY

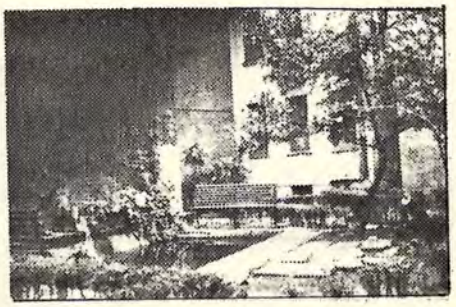


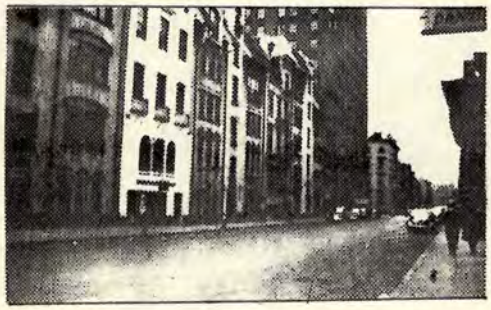


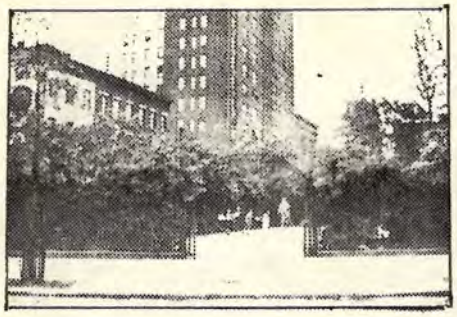


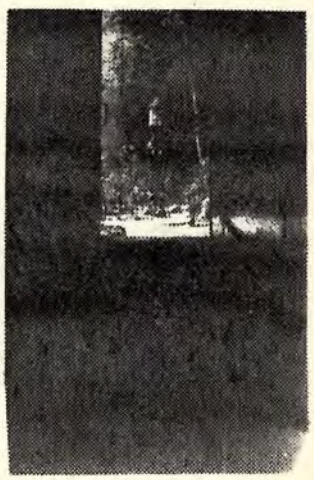












RENAISSANCE?

(Written In The Mountains, 1946.)

Every age has its quantum of indispensable illusions, with an ever-readiness to make excuses for them. We, too, have vanity enough and bombast and provencialism enough, God knows. These are imputable things, yet they are also the things which make for rabid partisanship and a lamentable lack of critical intelligence.

The contemporary philosophic and aesthetic approaches to any manifestation of American Letters amount to little more than earnest sophistry. Our sound bourgeois literature, with its few freaks and minor aesthetic asses, is dominated by so-called critics and publishers ambitiously sky-scraping weath, that somehow fails to impress.

Literature is the most enduring of all the arts, yet in this age of nightmare transition, we write for change and never for duration. Books are willed after a pattern. Show-pieces are made of dead imagery. Lifeless notions that do not merit a moment's impressed are jealously hoarded. Once truly creative senses have been saturated with formaldehyde, and our literature has responded by becoming sterile compilation of incarcerated researchers. Modern American writers spend all their time in madly hopping up and down, and swear they're moving forward.

They have made an art out of conceptual fooling, and Best-Sellers spawn like maggots on a dung heap. As Alethia observed in 1929:

".....they can criticize,
Make love,
Beget,
And yet,
It is all lies!"

The contemporary arena of American Letters smells of the charnel house. The correlative fact of our writers' growing effeteness is aesthetic and artistic (they are not interchangeable words) extinction. Their strange and disturbed labours reveal all too clearly the harrowing sense of insufficiency that is their hall-mark.

The vulgar egotism and flagrant narcissicism of our literature is proof of an irreconcilable cleavage between writers and life. They seem to have lost their grip on real life; or else they do not seem capable of gripping life quite hard enough to where they might be

taken seriously....the psycho-neurotic plight of a medium that is dying all around us.

Filched of its deeper energies, American Letters have lost their significance, and offer hardly any challenge at all to readers. An inverted, pathological stance that inevitably parallels decay, and which the recent War barely impressed, is ours by virtue of the myths we perpetuate.

In the orgy of Dadaesque excesses following the Kaiser's War, our belief in nothingness gave over to a mystic eagerness to walk forever before reality wearing blinders. It was called a Renaissance. In the gaudy and streamlined phraseology today, the earlier beliefs have been revived to do battle for a long dead cause.

Abetted by the national mania of standardisation-at-any-price, with its consquence development og bovine minds, our writers have fabricated an entire literary experience based upon lies, distortions, non-reality, and which everyman is beginning to accept as symptomatic of the real world.

What everyman reads today is dictated solely by what some faceless publisher in New York gives him to read. They have done more than propogate a big lie, they have committed a crime against our intelligence, which is worse, since it is deathless.

Everyman's reading habits have been poisoned in a classical Borgian manner, to such an extent that they feel they must have this redundant crap, or perish. The nobler possibilities of our creative writers have been diseased and corrupted by literay pimps with power complexes that would have done credit to Hitler.

Our literature, despite purple pundits to the contrary, is the product of our self-allowed society. All literature functions as a contingency of the *kultur und Zeitgeist* that nurtured it. Standing knee-deep in the sewerage of their own manufacture, controllers of our published books have managed to translate the lie of their own urbacitic mentalities into every artistic expression.

Even the once quality literary periodicals have become amateur psychoanalytical labs for the further distillation of the ruling literary myths. As Thackeray once observed;

> *"No writer among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a Man! We must drape him and give him a certain conventional simper. Society will not tolerate the genuinely creative in Art."*

Thackeray is out of fashion today, but his observation is quite true for American Letters today.

What the genuinely creative writer is facing here is much more than a mere literary crisis - he is facing the total bankruptcy of his medium. Modern literay doctrines are little more than faded formulae, static vestages of a decadent nomenclature.

The move towards individual isolation during the so-called Renaissance collapsed after the Kaiser's War, but such is the tenacity of ephemeral arty ideas that echoes of it were being mindlessly defended in Paris up to the advent of Hitler's War.

The continuity of the earlier concepts so heroically put down by Anderson, Aiken, Dreiser, O'Neil, Rosenfeld, *et al.*, are being daily whittled away. When faith falters, it fades. Today, intellectual insecurity leads all art expressions around by the nose. The enigmatical ironies, inescapable inhumanities, the contradictions and absurd illogicality of our lives have become the mad motifs.

We are even denied the cosmological depair that under-shot Schopenhauer's protestant pessimism. There is about us an active air of participating in helplessness. One cannot evaluate an experience dispassionately while living at the heat of it. A Frenchman, thinking of other things, captured out modern literary spirit, when he wrote:

> *"I write without knowing. As soon as I know, I do not have anymore faith. There is, then, between me and Reality a mirror in which I see myself, with my doubts, my remorse, my fears and my insufficiency. I survey myself. I am a tortured man."*
>
> *Une Vic Secrete* - Lenormand

During the turnip years of 1939 through 1945, our literature remained astonishingly uniform, morbidly unaffected by the cancer of inhumanity that was devouring the vital organs of Western civilisation. Even the bastardised "war" stories, not to mention the movies, allowed everyman to actually believe he was an instant authority on military strategy, global economics, international trade, foreign politics, *ad infinitum, ad nauseum*. Such literary corruptions were but reedy trumpets blown in a gale, merely emphasising our surface values and our sterility within the aesthetic experience.

Modern writers mistake their pathological loneliness for the dubious intellectual strength of the crowd, the many. They wade heavily through neuropolitic distempers and think they are dealing with creative ideologies. The word for modern American Letters can only be moronic..... Their irrelevant generalities anent life pay

lip-service to a god whose divinity stinks.

Only the most catholic among us would insist that American Letters does not stand in constant refutation of any truly creative mission, in mockery of a Renaissance. We still boast of frontier values and frontier realism; both are glib expressions, of the lips and tongue and not of the mind. In the metamorphosis of values they now masquarade as Book-Of-The-Month selexions.

Here is the naked truth, still smelling of souring milk and Johnson's Baby-Powder: *we have no enduring literay values and our writers have ceased to be a force to be reckoned with!*

When literature becomes an apologia for life, we retrogress, and all the emotional insistence upon a Renaissance does not extablish it as a fact.

* * *

AFTERTHOUGHT

The above piece is rather curious, on several levels. Putting aside the physical circumstances under which it was written, its rather sophomoric exposition, it does have a significance that was only realised when I unearthed the original manuscript 40 years later. It marks a period in which I was emerging from under the influence of the Paris Crowd, and probably Henry Miller in particular, and, as they say, was beginning to strike out on my own as a writer. As such, then, the piece does have an autobiographical value, and so I have included it here.

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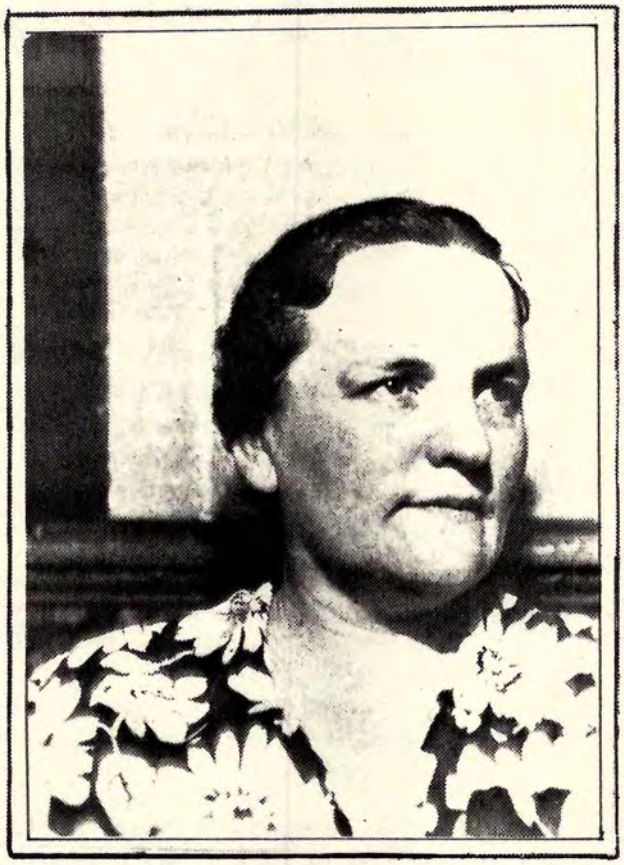
MARGINALIA



She was a short woman, standing just a few inches over five feet without shoes. When young, she had long chestnut-coloured hair, brown eyes, and a wide face.

She was essentially a silent, passive woman, which may have come about because of the rebuffs life had dealt her earlier expectations and youthful dreams. Occasionally, however, she could be heard singing around the house as she went about her domestic chores; mostly religious songs and hymns. It was said that she had a fine voice, and she did sing in church choirs on Wednesdays and Sundays. This was the only outside interest ever expressed and participated in. Her inside

interests, were many and varied.

Domestically industrious, she abhored dust accumulating on any flat surface in the house, and particularly in the diamond-shaped pleats of the black horse-hide divan in the parlour. Scrubbing the kitchen floor on hands and knees was a weekly chore, after which newspapers were laid down until the floor was dry. She was also adamant about keeping her son out of the kitchen when she was baking - as he might cause the dough to fall, a phenomenon he couldn't understand.

The domestic routine was fixed in concrete, as it were, and Monday was always wash-day, in which the large galvanised tub that had been used to make laundry soap was pressed into service, with the addition of a hand-wringer attached. The clothes-lines were 12-gauge wires strung between two "T" posts at the end of the backyard, and had to be wiped clean before the clothes were hung.

Saturdays were given over to the making of the laundry soap. It was made in the galvanised tub, suspended over an open wood-fire. Lye and carbonates were dumped into the water, and the mixture had to be stirred constantly, a chore that fell to the son. The resultant batch was a dirty tan in colour, and with a strong, unpleasant odour. It was chopt into chunks after solidifying, and was rather irritating to the skin. So-called toilette-soap was unknown.

Fridays were always "fish-day", featuring fresh fish that had to be beheaded, gutted, and de-scaled. This, too, was the son's task, and he grew up with a deep seated aversion to fish. He did, on occasions when it was placed before him, like a plate of fish-roe and scrambled eggs, with freshly baked soda-bread on the side, liberally smeared with fresh, pale yellow butter.

The woman and her son grew up as strangers. Each, in time, evolved seperate private worlds which rarely met, and never touched. Some ancestral instinct of self-preservation, perhaps, or a dense and over-whelming inarticulateness. To simply state that the lad's childhood was unnatural or abnormal would probably understate the case, as it was the only one he knew. He was aware that other lads at the school had parents, a mother and a father, and he had seen parents playing and laughing with their offspring, but he marked it as a very puzzling relationship.

Other than to remonstrate against his manners at table, dress, speech, his mother never talked to him. She never actually touched him physically. Having never really known his father, he accepted this glacial relationship as something northern and *perdu*, and found a new world in books. It is ever difficult for a child to think of his

parents as people, and when there is only one, concretised within her own inner world to which no visas were ever issued, and one has no experience of normal human communications, one accepts the actuality.

D.H.Lawrence once wrote that to be touched is to be emotionally moved. This being so, throughout his childhood it might be said that the son was never emotionally moved, although his budding intellect was constantly finding new and violent enthusiasms which stirred his imagination, but required no emotional involvement.

Sundays were, naturally, given over completely to attending church services, both in the morning and the evening. This was an unhappy day for the son, chiefly because he was forced to wear his "Sunday clothes", which consisted of a velveteen Fauntlaroy suit and a highly starched, detachable collar that rubbed his neck and left a red and tender ring when he removed it. His shoes were black patent leather, which had to be periodically polished.

At the church, and there were several in his childhood, his mother would sing easily and seemed to enjoy it. After the services or masses or classes, she would spend time talking with equal ease with other members of the congrgation, mostly women of her own generation. She would smile and nod and speak, but on the way home she became once again an undemonstrative, expressionless, silent woman, and their weekly routines would start all over again.

Later on, when the son tried to recall precise aspects of his childhood in an attempt to come to grips with an acceptable sense of his mother, he realised that he had never known her to attend a party, go to the theatre, a dance or picnic. Other than going to the church, she attended no social gathering of any sort, yet she was constantly telling her son how he should conduct himself in public, with strangers, with older people, with the priest. She had very few visitors, even on those days when she was *en ville*, and they, too, were usually women of her generation. They would sit in the wicker chairs in the solarium, drink tea, and talk, but what about, the son never knew, as he was forbidden to enter the solarium when there were vistors - or if the rugs had just been cleaned.

On occasion, for some minor infraction, she would exclaim:
"You're just like your father!"
This always confused him. He could not relate to the judgement. In his circumscribed and silent world, "father" was an abstract word. He would then always seek refuge in his books, where his Keltic caul and imagination remade the world for him.

That his mother was an oddly embittered woman he kenned early on, but without comprehension. When he tried, later on, to

establish some sort of normal human communication with her, something personal and compassionate, he failed. By that time such communication was beyond both their abilities. Her embitterment had become fixed, final, impregnable.

They shared a common heritage but without personal warmth, understanding, love. When he tried to please her with a small gift - a bar of her favourite soap, *Pears*, for example - it was accepted but there was never a response, and his confusion deepened.

He had heard neighbours refer to his mother as an handsome woman, and that his father had been a handsome man. But what was "handsome"? - and how did it relate to the here and now? - what was it's significance to the daily human experience? Her exposure to higher education had been through Trinity College, the only child of her family (she had two sisters) to gain admittance to such. She was a member of the local library and read books and periodicals regularly, and the periodicals, he noted, were usally what were referred to as "women's magazines" And quite frequently he would find her sitting by the oriole window, an open book in her lap, gazing steadfastly out upon the world that he sensed she really wasn't seeing. But her expression never changed, she simply seemed to be dreaming backward.

Having been born with the gift of wonder and a Keltic caul, the son grew up with an obsessive need to *know* - anything and everything. In consequence, he wasperpetually asking questions of his mother, the burden of which was always: *why?* Her response was usually to tell him to be quiet, or go and find the O.E.D. That latter admonishment was not always easy to comply with, as some words that had caught his ear he did not know how they were spelt. She once remarked that he had been born with a question mark in his head instead of a brain.

That she was a starkly lonely women, he came to realise in time, but what does a child comprehend of loneliness when his daily private world is filled with a burgeoning sense of wonder and worlds new found and beautiful in books?

Once, on returning home from school he found his mother quietly weeping. This startled him, as it was a new experience. And when she told him that her father had died, he simply stood there, mute, motionless - aghast. He was conscious of a depressing sense of helplessness - he didn't know what to do. He had a perhaps ancestral instinct to reach out and touch her, a comforting or compassionate gesture, but he had no experience in touching her, nor had he ever been touched by her. So he simply stood there in quiet anguish.

When the son went out into the world and later on survived

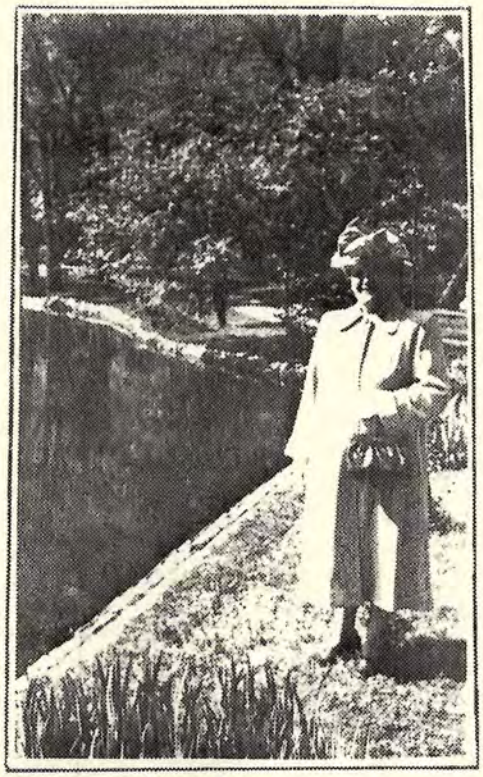
the shock of recognition, it was natural, or so it seemed to him, to want to share with his mother the acclaim given his writings and other creative labours. She accepted his books and magazines and paintings and music, placing them on the table in the parlour, without comment and, as he learned, never read any of them. She expressed neither delight nor judgement in his accomplishments.

The mother and son remained virtual strangers until the day she died. News of her death generated an instant sense of lost, but he couldn't say what was lost. It was less a sense of personal loss than a sense of a constant having been removed from his life. A periferal constant, to be sure, always with cognizance but never, strangely, really integral with his private destiny. And, again, his paramount emotion was one of confusion. He simply did not know how he should feel, think, respond. This, then, was the ultimate end result of a childhood recalled chiefly as a perpetual state of aggreived helplessness and strange disquiet.

She was a short woman, standing just a few inches over five feet without shoes. When young, she had long chestnut-coloured hair, brown eyes, and a wide face.

She was also my mother.....

* * *



MAYMONT, 1947

Bozeman, February 4. 1987

Dear Mr. Moore,

I need to at least send you another note concerning your fascinating The Early Literary Essays. It is a sad story when one does not even find properly peaceful time to read challenging writing. Your idea of a biographical collage rather than a continuous narrative has a fascination, that I have not experienced before. It illuminates you as a person in a very special way, showing also the context of your life strongly. It is exciting to get a rather critical but very personal glimpse at Nin. It adds a new dimension, also to her writing. I am always especially touched by your writing about your Irish heritage and cannot help but feel many tragic undercurrents there. Your essay,
Park Where No Children Play affected me also strongly. It is an experience that borders the extrasensory or a dimension we are usually afraid to deal with; on the fringes of "reality". Jery Southern and Paul Rosenfeld have such a tragic undercurrent. I always find that tragedy and drama are much closer to home as we want to believe. You show it very clearly and painfully.

I have wrestled with some of the other essays- they need patient reading, or I need to overcome some of my own biases or convictions. I will work on them more in the next weeks. I will follow up on your essays on the aesthetics of photography. I am just now with a class of bright students into Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes, which takes much of my time.

If you don't mind I will treat your writings with the integrity I feel they deserve which with me also means TIME, since I have to care for my family and my teaching obligations. So, please have further patience with my reading style. My apologies for my rather anguished post card reply, but I know that you honor honesty.

I sincerely hope that this will be a good year for you and I thank you for sharing your writings with me.

With best wishes, your

Rudi Dietrich

GUNDELA, COUNTESS von GNEISENAU;
Commenting on "COLOGNE IS A CIRCULAR CITY", An Uncompleted Manuscript.

"Thank you for the opportunity of reading The Cologne Manuscripts. I am flattered that you should seek my judgement, good or bad. I have read it from first page to last with the greatest of pleasure - your deep knowledge of the German psyche amazed me!

"It also amused me, and I read some portions with an impish grin, as I recognized those traits and observations you recorded. As an outsider, with the sensitivity of the Irish, you certainly have an edge on me. As you state, being German means not really analyzing your trends, your psyche, or your actions. Germans never analyze, they just "know" - and you spell that out beautifully! Of course, such a German attitude does not change reality.

"Biedermeir...you said you could not find the genesis of the term. It is a name that actually stems from a figure in a humouristic magazine, depicting a bourgeois, a narrow-minded citizen. Bieder mean "upright"; it also means honest and common-place. The bourgeoise had arrived at a level close to the adored aristocracy, had finally been able to accumulate possessions - furniture, things, etc. The Biedermeir has expressed itself most obviously in furniture style and archtecture of the last century. You said "thoroughly middle-class citizenry" - and that's exactly it.

"Over-all, your observations are superb! - and oh! - so true! You can only be misconstrued by those you would not call your friends, anyway. You are honest without hurting anyone's feelings...honest, as only you can afford to be. The Cologne Manuscripts are by no means dégagé and are worthwhile to be printed.

"Back to the writings: the analysis of the three ladies has been fascinating to read. Marianne Hollmann, of course, I know and your description is excellent. Hildegard Hoppen...she must be a special person to have drawn so much of your interest, and I would have liked to know her. I suspect that she, too, is one of the spirits that moved you, and stirred your interest in Things German? She must appreciate your complex study of us, the Germans.

"In all, it has been a great and exciting pleasure to read The Cologne Manuscripts, one for which I want to thank you again. Do get well, D.H.; we need you and all you have to give to this world, now more than ever."

* * *

These comments have been extracted from a long and generous letter written by the Countess, & I would share them with you.DH

The

Literary

Autobiography

of

D. H. Moore

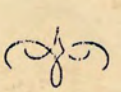
1 - EARLY LITERARY ESSAYS

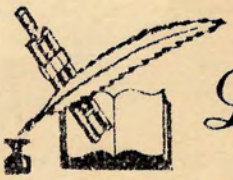
2 - THE KÖLN MANUSCRIPTS

3 - PEREGRINATIONS

4 - LETTERS WRITTEN ON THE WIND

5 - ALL OUR DAYS WERE AUTUMN



The Editorial Group,  *Ltd.*

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